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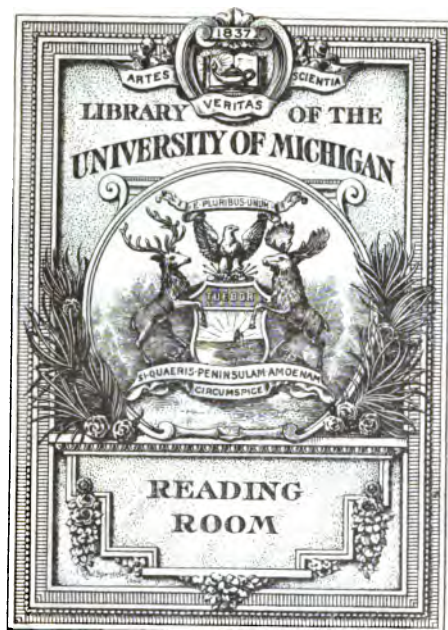
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# Penal Servitude

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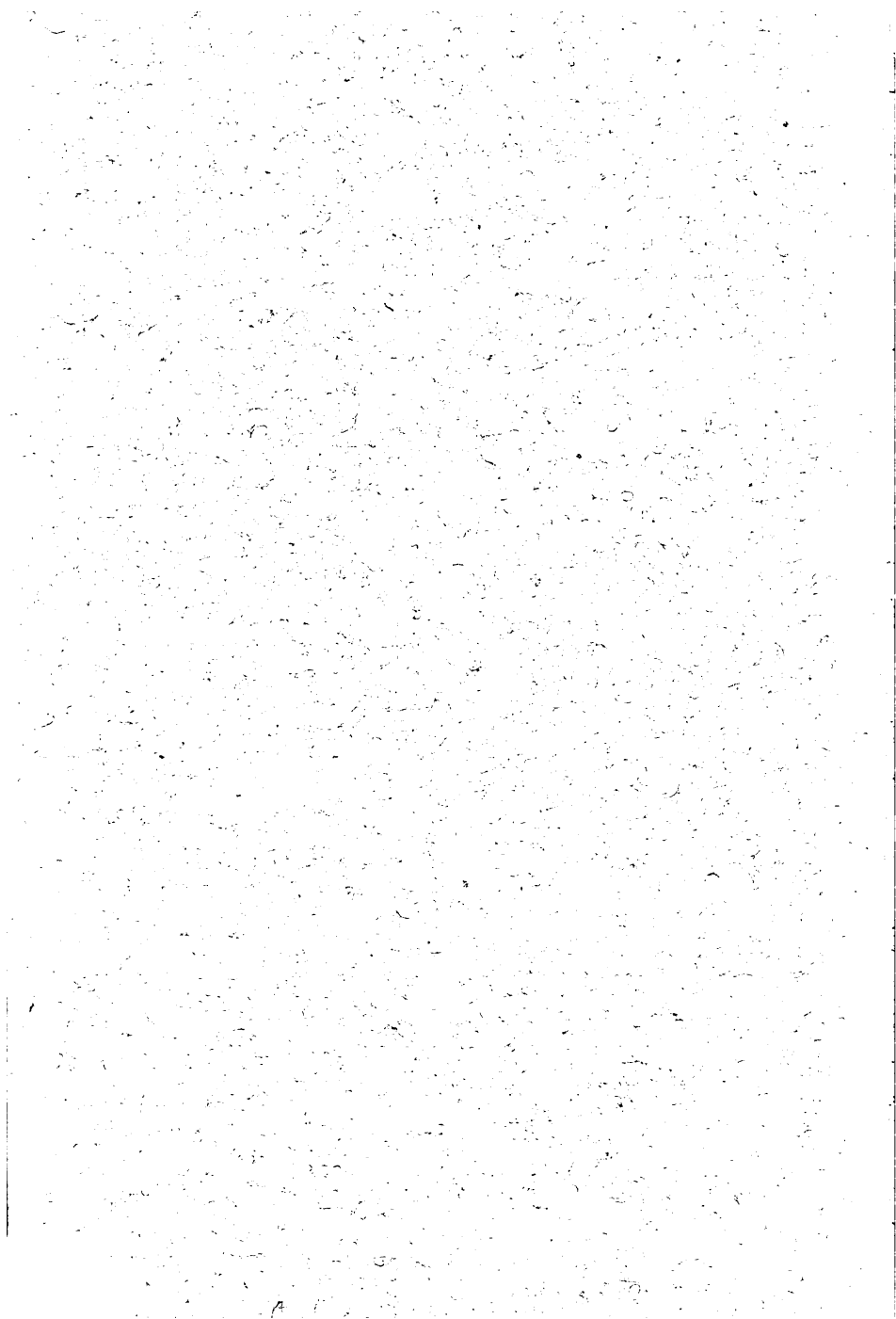


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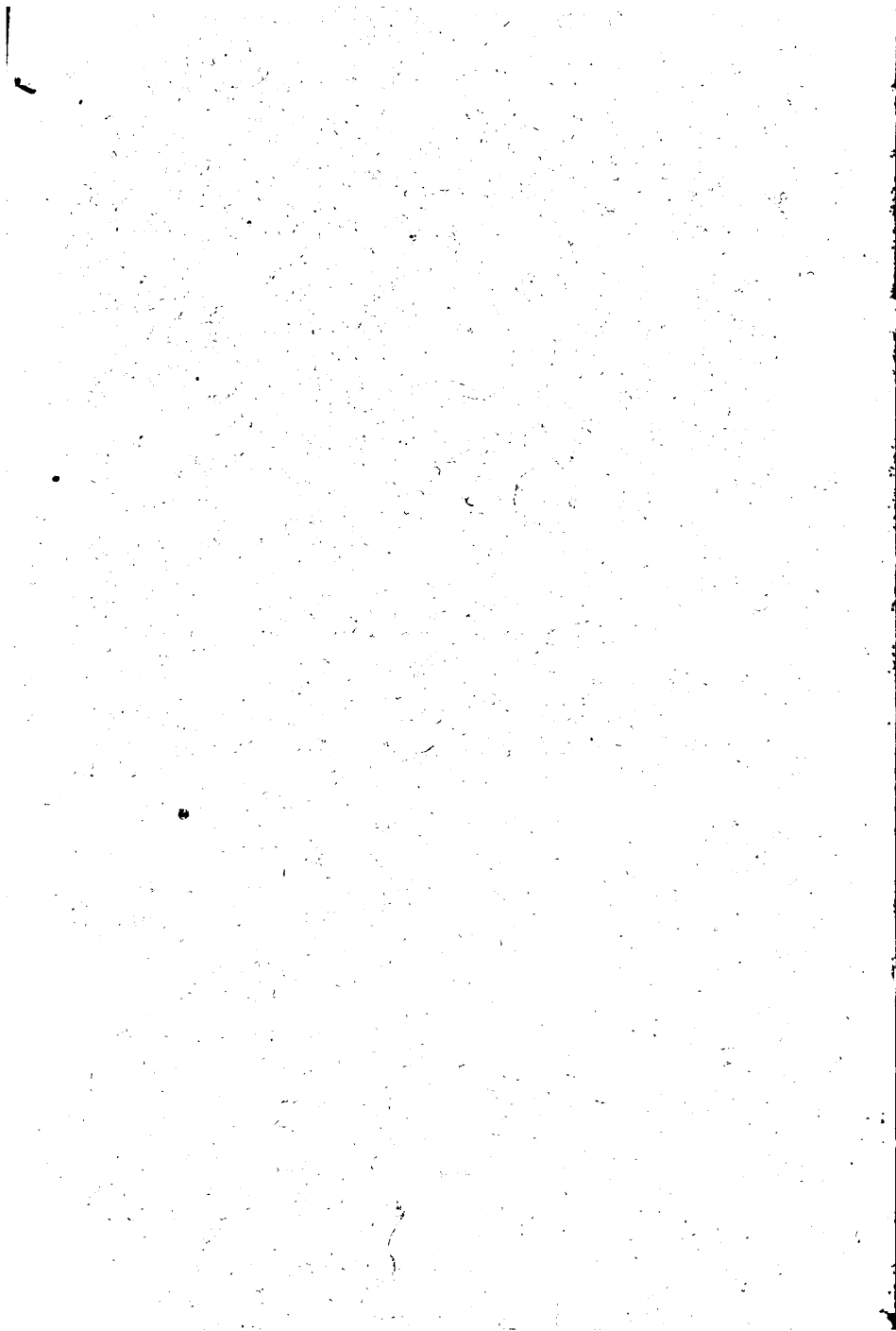
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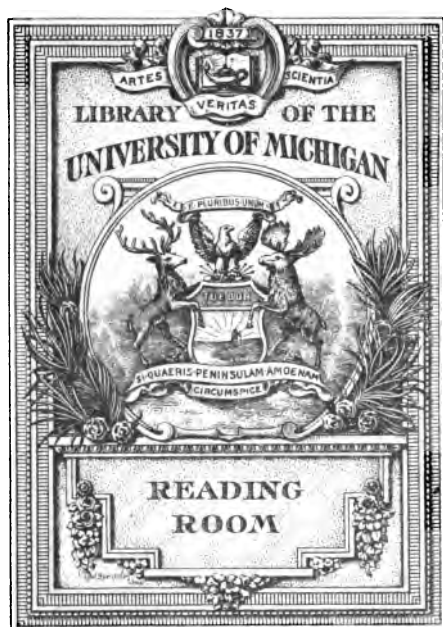




# PENAL SERVITUDE

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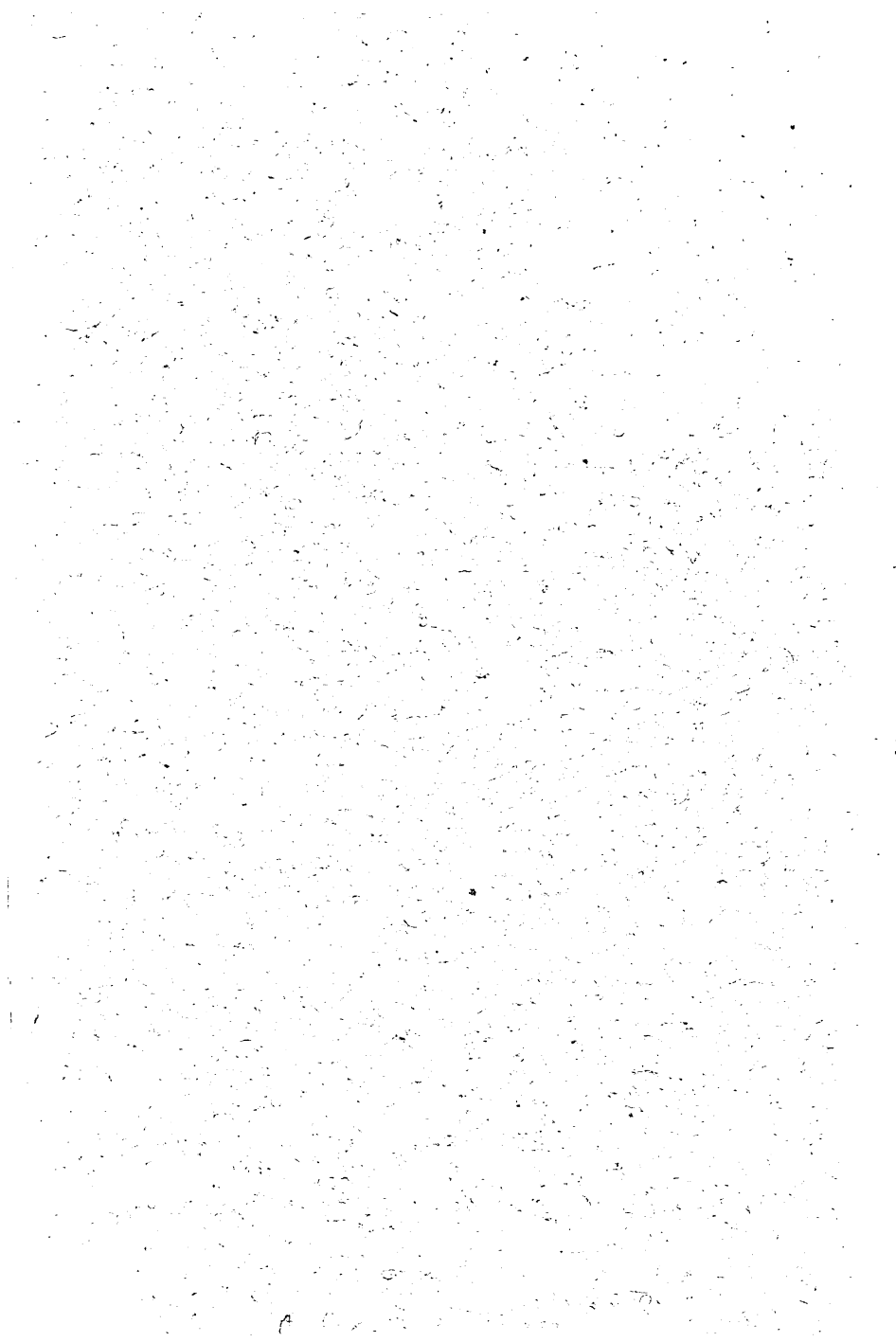


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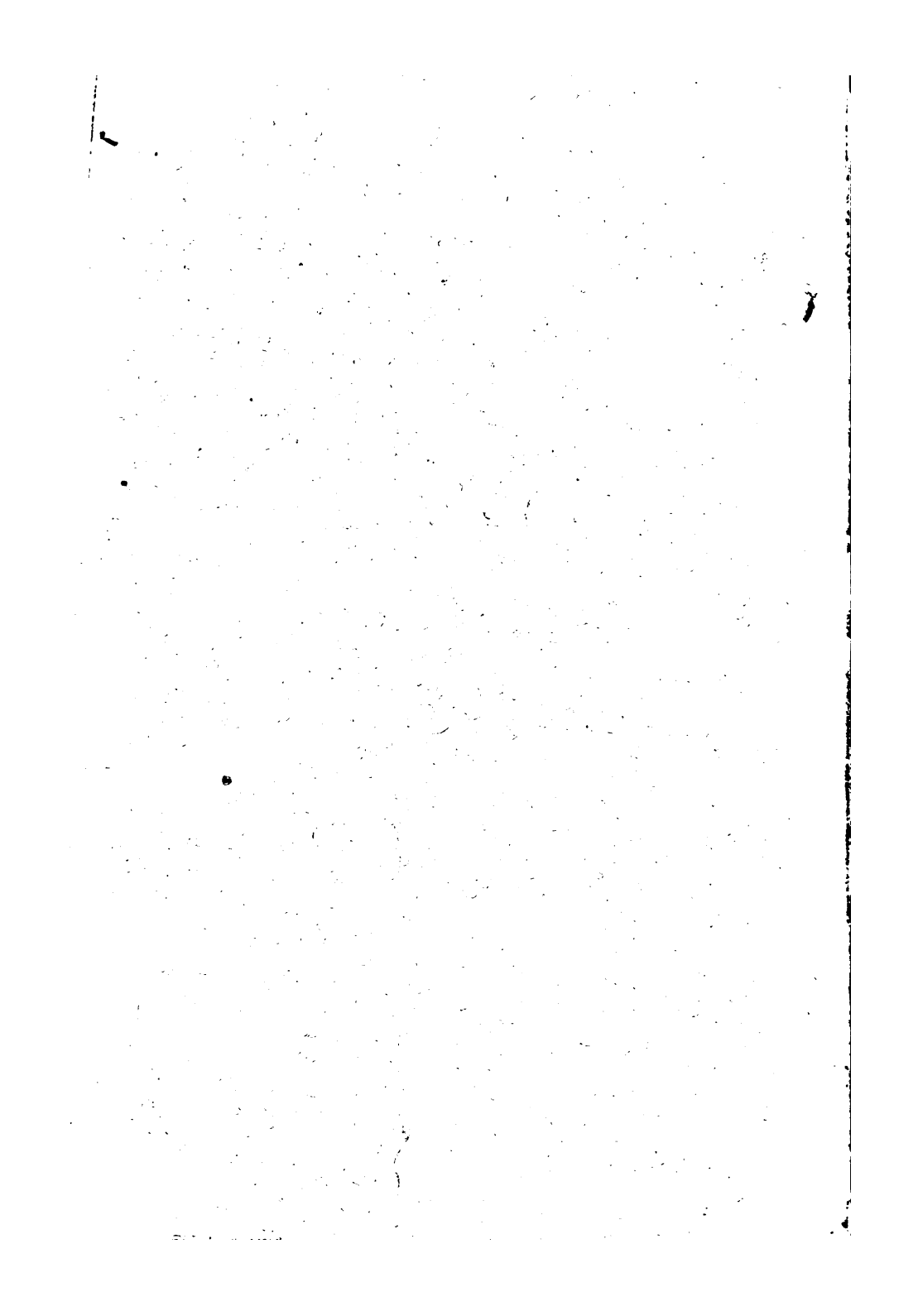
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# **PENAL SERVITUDE**

### Some Press Opinions

**The Standard.**—'A faithful, and apparently impartial, account of life in a convict prison is always worth reading. In this case it is supplied by a man of education and intelligence, who had his wits about him, used his eyes, and was not too much overcome by his misfortunes to lose his sense of proportion. His book is really informing on many points, while on others it makes suggestions for improvement in the administration of our gaols which call for attention.'

**The Daily Telegraph.**—'He does not write with any animosity of the prison officials and prison life. He awards praise here and blame there with an air of absolute detachment and impartiality which is perfectly convincing. There are good chapters on prison punishments, irreconcilables, suicides, "balmies," and "coppers," on prison spies and tale-bearers to the authorities. The book is of great interest, quite apart from the personality of the author.'

**The Pall Mall Gazette.**—'A soberer book than this could scarcely be imagined. The author has written an extremely straightforward and impressive book. Those who pick up "Penal Servitude" expecting to be horrified with melodrama or agonized by terror will be disappointed. The whole of it is written in a very systematic, calm, unexaggerated way, which cannot fail to increase its value as a document for prison reformers. All through the author strives to give a fair picture of his life as a convict, without any glaring colours or striking epithets. "Penal Servitude" is a book of curious cogency, which no student of social problems can afford to ignore.'

**The St. James's Gazette.**—'There is not, from beginning to end, one expression in bad taste, or a single artificial sentiment. Viewed as a whole, the book is a courageous one, and likely to prove of real value, both in regard to its special object of assisting in the elucidation of prison truths and helping to show the way to some much-needed reforms, and because it stands as an interesting and almost unique revelation of human character.'

**The Westminster Gazette.**—'The writer deals with prison life in all its phases, and some of his criticisms and suggestions seem well worthy of consideration—the more so from the fact that he writes in general in a moderate spirit. It is a volume certain to be widely read.'

# PENAL SERVITUDE

By

W. B. N.

' I have studied mankind from my Topsy-Turvey  
Close, and I reckon somewhat true—  
Some are fine fellows, some right scurvy ;  
Most are a dash between the two.'

GEORGE MEREDITH

New York :

G. P. Putnam's Sons

London : William Heinemann

1903



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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I SHOULD like to state that the notes on which this volume is based were in the first instance made with no view to publication. They have, however, proved of more interest to a few intimate friends than I had anticipated, and if by publishing them I can in the least degree ameliorate the lot of some of those with whom I came into such unfortunate contact, the additional publicity which this gives to my own imprisonment will seem to me not a useless sacrifice.



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# I

## RUNNING INTO DANGER

IN June, 1896, being in money difficulties, I took a course which, after giving me endless worry, at last brought me within the arm of the law. The case of L—— v. S—— C——, tried before the late Lord Chief Justice at the end of November, 1897, received such wide publicity at the time that it is unnecessary for me to recall the details of it here. Briefly, what it amounted to was this : the late Mr. S—— L—— brought an action against Captain S—— C—— to recover on some promissory notes which he had discounted for me, and which bore Captain S—— C——'s name and my own. Captain S—— C—— denied liability on the ground that when he signed the documents he did not know they were bills. He acknowledged at the trial that I had told him he might read them if he chose, though I preferred he should not, and that he signed them without looking at them. This defence proved suc-

## Penal Servitude

cessful. I should like, however, to say that the recollection of the defendant as to the manner in which I obtained the documents which formed the subject of the trial was incorrect in several important points. He was not cross-examined either at the civil trial or in the criminal proceedings later ; and showed an extraordinary confusion of memory, to say the least, regarding incidents of vital consequence which had happened eighteen months before.

If Captain S—— C—— had only taken care to be strictly accurate, without in the least going out of his way to shield a man who had been his intimate friend, it would have made no difference to him, but a very great difference to me. Moreover, while he produced at the trial a good many letters from me, he failed to put in one written on the very day he signed the documents in December, 1896, which certainly ought to have been produced. This letter crossed one from him saying that he wanted to look at the documents, and stated that the said documents would not be used, but would be destroyed in his presence if he would call at a certain hour next day. He came as requested, and I showed him his signatures. I then told him that, if he really wished to see what

## Running into Danger

he had signed, I would let him read the papers through before we burnt them, on condition that he promised never to disclose their contents. He said he would like very much to read them, and he undertook that he would not mention a word about them to anyone. He read them through, and we burnt them. Unfortunately, he seems to have considered for his own protection that it was necessary to tell his solicitor, and also several of his brother officers, and shortly afterwards he went to stay at a country house where there was a large party, and there again he told the same story, which soon became public. This exposure of the facts led eventually to my being prosecuted, and receiving a heavy additional punishment for this very offence, which might otherwise never have been heard of. I suppose I have no right to complain, as I had undoubtedly wronged him.

At the close of the trial of L—— v. S—— C—— the Lord Chief Justice deferred judgment ; but the evidence in the case, with the findings of the jury upon it, had already put my conduct in such a light that I saw I was in great danger.

Many of my friends did not think there was any fear of a prosecution, because neither party had really suffered through me. It was true



## Penal Servitude

Mr. L—— had lost his action against Captain S—— C——, and with it his security for these particular bills. But upon the whole account between us, from first to last, which extended over a period of nearly six years, he was a very large gainer. Mr. L——'s attitude towards me, in fact, all the way through, was straightforward. He was compelled to take the course that he took, and certainly I have never blamed him, except for one thing.

At the last interview I had with him, some months before the trial, he assured me that he would call me as a witness, so that I might tell my own story. This he afterwards decided not to do, for reasons of his own, not realizing how seriously it might affect me later. On the other hand, Captain S—— C—— had no motive whatsoever for pursuing me further. He had satisfied the code of honour of his brother officers by ruining me in the eyes of the world, and he had relieved himself from liability by successfully defending the action. After that he had every conceivable reason for wishing to let the matter drop as soon as possible. No other person was concerned in it in any way.

It was natural to assume, therefore, that nothing

## Running into Danger

more would be heard of it. I had a strong feeling, nevertheless, that it would be a great mistake even to appear to be an absconder. I therefore wrote to my solicitors, Messrs. Lewis and Lewis, asking them to notify the Public Prosecutor, as soon as the Lord Chief Justice should give his judgment, that I was ready to surrender and stand my trial, if I were to be prosecuted. This letter was sent to the Public Prosecutor, accordingly, the day after Lord Russell delivered his judgment, three weeks having elapsed since the close of the trial of L—— v. S—— C——.

Before it could even be acknowledged, however, the *Times*, the *Daily News*, and the *Daily Chronicle* published most violent articles, openly accusing me of a crime which I had not until then been formally charged with by anybody; and one paper accused me of having run away, which was totally untrue. For months before the trial I had been staying with relations in Paris, and after the verdict I remained at the same address, going about quite openly among friends and enemies, if I had any. I had made up my mind all along to come over and take the consequences, whatever they might be. I do not pretend that I was prompted in that by any particularly high sense of

## Penal Servitude

moral duty. I simply reasoned in this way: If I were prosecuted and went to England and faced it, and were found guilty, I should be sent to prison for a certain time, and there would be an end of it. After that, at all events, I should be a free agent and able to go where I chose in peace, and make the most of the life that was left to me. But if I shirked it and ran away, I should have the danger always hanging over me, and would never be able to lead a life worth living at all. I should be a curse to myself and to all my belongings—most of all to those who were willing to excuse and assist me, and in the eyes of the world I should stand no better than if I had actually been in prison. The boldest course was the best, and I took it. But almost before I had had time to take it I was already denounced as a fugitive, and I got no benefit from facilitating the course of justice.

The last thing I wish to do is to run a tilt against the London press. I know their power and I know their value in upholding right against might. But to raise such a hue-and-cry is the very way to make a man abscond and take advantage of every possible means of avoiding a trial. I repeat, I never had any intention of running away, but I

## Running into Danger

must honestly say this: If I had known what hard measure would be meted out to me, mainly in response to newspaper clamour, I might have thought twice before I placed myself at the mercy of the Court whilst any chance of escape remained. Another result of the great publicity given to my case by the London press was that I became a marked man in Paris. The Public Prosecutor did not decide to take steps against me until seven weeks after the civil trial, and during all that time I was going about every day, constantly meeting friends and acquaintances, and it was curious to see how differently different people treated me. There were many who showed me that staunch good-fellowship which is never so welcome as at a time of anxiety and perplexity; but there were others who did exactly the reverse. It is the way of the world, no doubt, to give the cold shoulder to anyone who is in a mess, though one would think that even that might be done without ill-manners. The change that suddenly came over some who had been among my most effusive acquaintances was so grotesque that it only amused me; but there were other instances in which the effect was very different.

## II

### BAIL OR NO BAIL ?

ON January 20, 1898, Sir George Lewis telegraphed to me at Paris that it had been decided to prosecute me, and that he concluded I would carry out my offer and come over and face it. I replied that I should be back in forty-eight hours, and I arrived in London on the 22nd. The following day I saw Sir George Lewis, who at once wrote to the Public Prosecutor to say I was in London and would surrender at his office the following afternoon, which I did. I was then taken before the late Sir John Bridge, the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, at Bow Street. He was a very old, infirm man, and did not seem to hear much of what was going on. The lawyers made their statements, and, after formal evidence had been given, the case was adjourned for a week. Sir George Lewis asked for bail, and it was allowed without demur—in fact, at this hearing Sir John Bridge was simply passive, assenting to every-

## Bail or no Bail?

thing, but taking no particular notice of anything.

When I appeared before him the second time a week later, however, he had completely changed. I don't know what had happened to him in the interval, but he evidently regarded me now as an unmitigated blackguard, and, having committed me for trial, positively refused to allow bail. He was so deaf that everything had to be repeated to him, and even then he seemed to be in a complete fog. He would have it that I had run away and been arrested; and when the inspector to whom I had surrendered told him that he had not arrested me, but that I had come over and given myself up, as arranged, he cut him short with the remark that that was the same thing. Sir George Lewis pointed out that I had had weeks to run away in if I wished to do so, but that I had voluntarily come over from Paris directly I heard it was intended to prosecute. Mr. Ivory, representing the Public Prosecutor, did not oppose bail being given. But it was all of no use. Sir John Bridge insisted that no amount of bail would keep me from running away, and that was an end of it.

I have no doubt that he had now got into his

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head what had appeared in the papers about me at the time of the civil trial, and supposed that, because I had been abroad, therefore I had absconded and been brought back on a warrant; and he was too feeble in body and mind to be made to understand what had really happened. I cannot help feeling that he did me a monstrous injustice in refusing me bail. I have been told by more than one eminent lawyer that it was my right to have bail, and his duty to grant it in the absence of any strong ground for believing that I intended or was likely to fly from justice. There was not a vestige of ground. I had done nothing to raise such a suspicion, and I was able to offer bail to a very large amount, with undoubted sureties. When this is the case it is most unusual to refuse bail, even in charges of the gravest kind, short of the capital offence.

Readers who have never been through the experience may think, perhaps, that I am making too much of this, and that, if a man is in for a trial at all, it does not signify whether he is detained in custody or not for a week or two beforehand. This, however, is quite a mistaken idea. Of course, cases differ, but in most it is of the greatest importance to the accused that he

## Bail or no Bail?

should have his liberty up to the last moment before the trial. In the eye of the law he is still innocent, whatsoever the appearances may be against him, and he is entitled to the use of his time before trial, both to arrange his affairs and to prepare his defence. The refusal of bail prevents him from getting that frequent and unrestrained access to lawyers, witnesses, friends, and papers which is very necessary for piecing together evidence, and making the best of any points there may be in his favour. I know the results to me were very serious indeed. I had only been a week in England, and had had no time to attend to private matters or to go into numberless details connected with my case.

One of my nearest relatives was very ill at the time, and died four days after my trial without my having seen her, and another died suddenly of heart disease within a week of my committal to Holloway.

I was also denied the benefit of being at any of the consultations with my counsel, as I had not seen them previously, none of us having ever dreamt of bail being refused. In short, Sir John Bridge's strange animosity and obstinacy deprived me at a moment's notice of the time I had counted



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on for private and legal preparations for my trial.

I do not mean to say that, if I had been allowed bail, and been present at all the consultations with my counsel, I should have been able to set up a successful defence; but I might very well have recalled facts and explained circumstances, so that my counsel would have been in a position to say a good deal more for me than they did. It is possible, indeed, that we might have taken quite a different course from the one we took, with a better result. At all events, the result could not have been worse.

As showing once more the singular unfairness of some of the papers towards me, I may remark here that at a later stage the *Times*, in a leading article, brought up this question of bail, and declared that 'Sir George Lewis at Bow Street was reduced to trying to "bluff" Sir John Bridge into giving bail against all ordinary rules.'

The writer knew nothing about the subject on which he made such a positive assertion. Sir George Lewis would have failed in his duty if he had not made every effort to get his client the advantage of bail, and though it is true there were high words between him and Sir John Bridge, that

## Bail or no Bail?

was solely caused by the magistrate's deafness and irritability, and by his accusing me of the intention to run away. Further, the *Times* writer was absolutely mistaken in saying that giving bail is against all ordinary rules. I doubt whether a single case can be found at all like mine in which bail in substantial sureties has been refused to a man who came back at once to face his trial.

### III

#### A 'POPULAR' JUDGE

I WAS sent direct from Bow Street to Holloway Prison, where I arrived about five o'clock, and was put into what is called a furnished cell—that is to say, a cell containing a table and some chairs, with a drugget on the floor, so that it looks something like a private room. I found the first feeling of being locked up very depressing, and I did not easily get used to it, though, of course, as long as I was in Holloway I was not altogether a close prisoner. I wore my own clothes, and I had my meals brought in from a restaurant. I also had newspapers and books to read, and I was allowed to write letters and receive visits. But I am naturally of a very active temperament, and to be caged in a small space, with nothing much to do except to brood over my position and look forward to the fate that might be in store for me, was terribly irksome both to body and mind.

One morning an incident occurred to break the

## A 'Popular' Judge

monotony, which was so curious that I think it worth mentioning. While waiting my turn with a number of others to go in and see the doctor, I found myself almost at the end of the line with a man standing next me who seemed to take an interest in me. He was decidedly gentlemanly-looking, and though shabbily dressed and unshaven, he had evidently seen better days. Being close to me, he asked me in a low tone whom I was going to be tried by. Though he scarcely spoke above a whisper, his voice sounded like that of an educated man, and his question seemed kindly meant. I replied that I did not know by whom I was to be tried, not being then aware that my case might come before a Judge, the Recorder, or the Common Serjeant. The man said :

‘ Well, for your own sake, I hope you won’t be tried by the Judge, Mr. Justice Lawrance, for he is about the worst man on the Bench for anyone like you to come before.’ Then with a smile he added : ‘ If you were plain Bill Sykes he would make it much lighter for you. He will punish you more for who you are than for what you have done.’

I asked him whether he knew Mr. Justice Lawrance, and he replied, ‘ Rather!’ with a

## Penal Servitude

peculiar sort of smothered laugh that gave all the more emphasis to the expression. I have not the least idea who he was, and I never saw him again, but his prophecy proved to be strikingly correct.

My trial was fixed for February 15, and on that day I left Holloway in a four-wheeler with two warders, about nine o'clock. When we approached the Old Bailey there was a huge crowd in the street, and we could hardly get the cab through. People were getting out of their carriages, some distance from the prison, and walking the rest of the way on account of the block. On driving into Newgate, I was at once shown into a small, bare room just underneath the dock, where I met Sir George Lewis and Mr. Lawson Walton, K.C., and had a few minutes' conversation with them. They then told me that they had thought it better for me to plead 'Guilty' to the two indictments for fraudulently obtaining Captain S—— C——'s name to documents to be used as valuable securities, in June and December respectively, while pleading 'Not guilty' to the three indictments for forging and uttering the documents, which it was understood would be dropped, and naturally so, as it was an absolutely false charge. Of course I

## A 'Popular' Judge

accepted their advice without question, in the confident belief that on the lesser count I should get a moderate sentence.

I was then placed in the dock, and called upon to plead, and Mr. Charles Mathews addressed the Court for the prosecution. I must say he was scrupulously fair. He confined himself, in fact, to a description of the transactions as they came out at the civil trial, and he gave me credit for having come over to answer the charges 'at the earliest possible moment,' and having done all I could to make amends. His address, in short, was as much as to say that, though the Public Prosecutor had felt bound to take proceedings and to make the charge clear, there was no desire to press for a severe sentence. Mr. Lawson Walton followed with a statement of points in my favour, with a view to mitigation of sentence; and Mr. Mathews so far helped him to say that neither Captain S — C — nor anyone associated with him had ever sought to attach criminal responsibility to me for using his name as I did, though I must say this was hardly in accordance with facts. He further gave Mr. Walton the opportunity of stating that my friends had provided funds to meet my liabilities. If ever there was an occasion when a

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Judge might have tempered justice with mercy to the satisfaction of all concerned, surely that was one. But Mr. Justice Lawrance saw otherwise.

No advocate trying to make a sensation could have appealed more to class prejudice than he did. While professing to give the fullest weight to my counsel's 'eloquent' words, he yet twisted them round so as to make them tell dead against me. He denied indignantly that punishment falls more heavily on a man of high position than on an ordinary person. Nobody had ever said that it did; but that was Mr. Justice Lawrance's way of intimating that he meant to make me smart for belonging to a well-known family. When he came to this, he made a strange pretence of wishing to spare my feelings. He said: 'I do not want to say anything to trouble you unnecessarily,' and he immediately proceeded to say the bitterest things he could think of, as if determined to prevent my ever holding my head up again. He fittingly concluded by condemning me to five years' penal servitude, the maximum penalty allowed by the law for the offence to which I had pleaded guilty. The stranger in Holloway had prophesied truly.

If I remember rightly, it was Lord Bacon who

## A 'Popular' Judge

said 'A popular Judge is a hateful thing,' but I do not think he can have used the word 'popular' in the ordinary sense. I think he must have had in his mind that sort of Judge who looks for popular applause and who studies what he supposes to be public opinion rather than what he knows to be justice.

Mr. Justice Lawrance delivered sentence in a loud voice, as if to complete the sensation of the scene by giving me a knock-down blow; but it had not that effect on me. One of the daily papers said I seemed utterly stunned, but, in fact, I never felt less stunned in my life. All through that day I never had the least feeling of nervousness or shakiness. Heaven knows this was not due to indifference. I attribute it to my having thought about it beforehand so long and so constantly that I had come to regard myself as someone else, with whom I could sympathize, but in whose feelings I had only a secondary interest. I dare say there were those present who were equally surprised and disappointed at my taking it so calmly. I have not good sight, and I could only with difficulty make out a few of the people near me, but I have since read in the papers that in the Court were many of my so-called old friends. The next



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number of *Truth* had a paragraph on the subject which is worth reprinting here :

‘When Damiens, who tried to assassinate Louis XV., had his limbs torn from him, the ladies of the Court witnessed the execution, and, as the drivers thrashed the horses, lisped, “Les pauvres chevaux ! les pauvres chevaux !” Someone has wisely said that “The world, after nearly two thousand years, has scarcely spelt out three letters of the meaning of Christianity.” At the close of the enlightened nineteenth century the ladies of London society throng to the Central Criminal Court to be present at the trial of a former companion, and to watch him as he is being dragged through the mire of disgrace ! Of the crime and of the well-merited punishment it is unnecessary to write here ; but in thus protesting against the unladylike conduct of such women, the unwomanly conduct of such ladies, I am giving voice to the feelings of abhorrence which their behaviour has generally excited.’

It will be noticed that this writer calls my punishment ‘well merited.’ In another part of the same issue of *Truth* it was said that I ‘deserved the full penalty, and the learned Judge deserved the congratulations which were offered him from

## A 'Popular' Judge

so many quarters on having dealt with a peer's son as if he had been an ordinary mortal.' Unfortunately, that is exactly what Mr. Justice Lawrance did not do. But this is just the sort of congratulation and praise that he laid himself out to gain, and it could not have come from a more appropriate quarter. The worst I wish Mr. Labouchere is that, if ever he gets into trouble, he may come before a Judge who really will deal with him as an ordinary mortal, and not make his aristocratic descent a reason for giving him double or treble the punishment that an ordinary mortal would get.

The *Times* indulged in nearly a column of triumph, mentioning my relatives by name and doing all it could to add to the severity of an already excessive sentence. It seems never to have struck these stern moralists that a man in my position, who has once been convicted, can never shake off the disgrace in all his life, whereas nine out of ten in the ordinary ranks of life are able, on leaving prison, to hide their identity and start afresh, if they choose to do so. Happily, there are far more eminent authorities than Mr. Justice Lawrance, Mr. Labouchere, or the *Times* leader-writer, who differ entirely in

## Penal Servitude

opinion from them on this point. The present Lord Chief Justice is one.

Quite recently, when a man of high standing in Lancashire was tried at Liverpool for embezzling large sums of money belonging to a trust estate, Lord Alverstone expressly stated that he 'felt bound to make allowance for the social degradation the prisoner had brought on himself, and for that reason he would pass a modified sentence of three years' penal servitude.' But the Lord Chief Justice is not a 'popular' Judge in the Baconian sense, and I sincerely trust he never will be.

## IV

### PLAIN TALES FROM THE PRISONS

I THINK it was Mr. W. T. Stead who said it ought to be part of the training of every Judge that he should himself undergo a term of imprisonment, so as to know exactly what the punishments he inflicts amount to, and how they affect different persons. It would certainly be a very good thing, and it might lead to much-needed reforms, if legislators and the public generally were made aware of what actually goes on within the walls of the prisons. I propose, therefore, to do what little I can towards that end by relating in the plainest form of narrative what happened to myself whilst at penal servitude, and what I observed and thought worthy of noting in the prison system. This has scarcely ever been done except in official treatises, which the public never see, or else in sensational articles by newspaper writers, which are often altogether misleading and often absurd, because they only describe what appears on the

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surface. I will try my best to lay the real facts before my readers.

As soon as sentence had been pronounced at the Old Bailey, I was taken down and placed in a cell, and was told that I could order what I liked for my luncheon. Having done so, I was locked in, but in a few minutes the door was again opened, and two gentlemen were shown into the cell. One of them, I believe, was one of the Sheriffs of London, who had been at the trial. He very kindly asked me if he could do anything for me, and whether I wished to write any letters. The warder, however, interfered, and said this could not be allowed, and the two gentlemen left. After I had had my luncheon—the last decent meal that I was to have for three years and nine months—some of my relations arrived, and I spoke to them in the presence of the Governor for about five minutes. I was then taken back to my cell, where I remained until three or four o'clock, the authorities not thinking it advisable for me to be taken out until the crowd had dispersed.

Before starting, I was handcuffed, and, accompanied by two officers, I was driven off in a four-wheeler. There were still a great many people

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about, and on the way I constantly saw my name in big type on the posters, with the verdict underneath. On arriving at Wormwood Scrubs I was handed over to the officials, and immediately taken to the receiving-room. There I undressed and had a bath, and then for the first time put on convict clothes, such as they were. No one article had the slightest semblance of fitting, as convicts do not get new outfits until they reach the prison where they serve their separate confinement. I was next examined by the doctor, who at once ordered me to be admitted to the hospital, as I was already beginning to suffer from a painful and troublesome internal complaint, which very nearly necessitated an operation. Before, however, being taken to my cell in the hospital, I was measured and weighed, and had all my hair clipped off. I was about four weeks in this cell, and was then moved into an association ward, as my complaint got so much worse, the doctors thought I could be better looked after there, especially at night, for there is always a nurse on duty, with a prisoner orderly. I was in rather a bad state, the nature of my malady making it almost impossible for me to lie down or get any rest. I also found the prison food very difficult

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to tackle, though I had so little inclination to eat anything that it did not matter much. The only other occupants of the ward were a man who had been for many years in the police force, but had been convicted of a violent assault on a superior officer when drunk on duty one night; and another who had killed his wife, and then cut his own throat so badly that he was only able to breathe through a tube, and lived entirely on liquids. He was a very quiet, inoffensive man, and I felt sorry for him; but it was rather revolting to be near him at meal-times, and I was glad when he was removed. I was seven weeks altogether at Wormwood Scrubs, and it seemed like seven years. It was the worst part of the whole imprisonment. When I had been in the cell for three weeks I got into such a state of nervous irritation that one day, if the priest had not come to pay me a visit at the critical moment, I firmly believe I should have given way to that violent impulse which often overcomes prisoners, and have destroyed the things in my cell.

After seven weeks I was ordered to be removed to Parkhurst. First offenders condemned to penal servitude, after a short time in a local gaol, are, as a rule, sent to Lewes prison to serve their separate

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confinement, and are afterwards removed either to Portland or to Parkhurst, the only two convict prisons where first offenders are sent. In my case, however, there were special reasons why I should not go to Lewes, and it was therefore decided to send me straight from Wormwood Scrubs to Parkhurst. Any change was a change for the better, yet, when the time came, for some reasons I was sorry to leave. The Deputy-Governor, Mr. N——, who was in charge during nearly the whole of my sojourn there, had been extremely kind, and so had the doctor, the priest, the Church of England chaplain, and the officers, with one exception. No one who has not been a prisoner knows what such kindness means. Whilst I was at Wormwood Scrubs Mr. Pickersgill, then M.P. for Bethnal Green, for some reason or other took a particular interest in me, and asked several questions in the House of Commons as to why I was allowed to do this or that. I wonder whether he would have been so concerned about me if I had been a burglar.

On March 26 I was removed to Parkhurst Convict Prison in the Isle of Wight. It had been snowing for two days previously, and, as the streets were very bad, I left Wormwood Scrubs



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soon after six a.m. to catch a train at Waterloo about eight. I was handcuffed and taken in charge of the principal warder of the hospital and an assistant warder. When we arrived at Waterloo we found we were half an hour too soon, and a railway official came up and told the warders they could take me into one of the waiting-rooms, where there was a fire. On looking through the door, however, I saw the room was full of people, so I asked to be allowed to remain out in the station instead. When the train came in I was locked in a third-class compartment, one of the inspectors having had some hot-water tins put in, for it was bitterly cold. A small crowd, of course, collected round the carriage to stare at me, for a prisoner in convict dress, though far from attractive, always causes a sensation. On arriving at Southampton, we immediately went on board the steamer, and I was taken below, where I remained until we arrived at Cowes. The weather being very rough, my handcuffs were taken off, but one or other of the warders sat by my side all the way across. At Cowes the usual idlers were waiting, but I was at once put into a small omnibus, which is used for the transport of prisoners, and reached Park-

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hurst about one o'clock, after the most unpleasant journey I had ever taken, which I hope never to repeat. On arriving at the prison, I was handed over to an officer and taken before the Deputy-Governor, Captain F——, who asked whether I had any complaint to make, to which I answered 'No.' I was then taken to the infirmary and examined by the medical officer, Dr. Q——, who at once admitted me on account of my internal trouble, which was still causing me great pain. Soon after I reached my cell the master tailor came, Mr. M——, a very nice man and a very capable officer, with one of the prisoners who worked in the tailors' shop, to measure me for my clothes. Every prisoner on being received into a convict prison is fitted out with a complete suit of new things, or things as good as new. As I was above the ordinary height, and there were no clothes of my size in stock, everything had to be made specially for me. I remained in the infirmary for three months, and was then moved up into what is known as the 'B' hall infirmary, where men who are not seriously ill are placed. I was not yet allowed to go out to work, as in those days every convict had to do nine months of what is called separate confinement.

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This means that out of the twenty-four hours he has one hour's exercise, and for the other twenty-three hours he is shut up alone in his cell, working for eight hours at any occupation that is considered suitable for him.

The work generally given to the men is making mail-bags, or rough sewing of some kind or other. But owing to my having got very much run down I was set to knitting stockings, which almost anyone can learn in a few lessons, and which, after a while, becomes rather absorbing. There is just enough thought required to keep the mind partly engaged ; and, as the knitter can walk or sit, or work in almost any attitude, he gets a certain amount of change.

I believe the prison authorities try their utmost to adapt the employments to the mental and physical needs of the different men under their charge ; but, at the best, the system of 'separate confinement' is a very bad one. It is only solitary confinement slightly improved, and it has some of the worst effects of that terrible punishment. The intention of it, doubtless, is to impress the prisoner with the gravity of his offence against society, and to bring him to a better state of mind. But in some cases, I am convinced, it has quite the

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opposite result. The solitude and the hopeless monotony, with nothing to think of but the long years of suffering and disgrace ahead, produces nervous irritation, approaching in some cases to frenzy, and, instead of softening the man, brings out all the evil there is in him. Under such conditions the worst companions he could have are his own thoughts. In men of a different temperament, again, it deadens all sensibility, so that they do not care a straw what happens afterwards, but would just as soon become habitual criminals as not. It is this sullen hatred of themselves and of everybody else engendered and fostered during the long, dismal months of separate confinement that makes the most dangerous and troublesome prisoners at a later stage. There are a third class, who, having no criminal instincts, nor any strong instincts at all, merely give way mentally without any acute distress, and become little better than half-witted by the time their separate confinement is at an end. It took the prison reformers many years to realize the truth of this, for separate confinement was one of their pet hobbies. But it has at last been recognised in a practical way, the term of this singularly mistaken form of punishment having now been reduced from nine months

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to five. This is a great improvement, for every day of such misery makes a difference. But it is not enough. If nine months were too long, so are five months. For all the good that it can do one month of separate confinement is all that is required, and even during that month it would do the prisoner no harm, but would help to save his self-respect and strengthen his good resolves or impulses, to let him feel that he is not altogether out of touch with humanity.

In November, when I had served nine months of my sentence, but was still in bad health, I went out with one of the hospital working parties, and found the change an unspeakable relief. The work we had to do was not beyond our strength. It consisted of mending the paths and odd jobs of that kind within the prison walls. From this time my health slowly improved, though I had become so thin that I was literally a walking skeleton. I had always been slender and light for my height, weighing about 12 stone, standing 6 feet  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch in my stockings; I now weighed no more than about 9 stone 10 lbs. In fact, I almost realized Euclid's definition of a line—namely, length without breadth. It seemed a marvel how I could be as well as I was with so little flesh. Any

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unknown prisoner who had shrunk to such a bag of bones as I was would assuredly have stood a good chance of being released on the ground that further imprisonment would endanger life. The Jameson Raiders were let out after only a few months, because their health was considered too delicate for them to bear even the mild restraint of first-class misdemeanants at Holloway! I wonder how they would have got on as real prisoners, for being a first-class misdemeanant is only playing at the game. From November, 1898, to May, 1899, in 'B' hall infirmary I was one of the assistant orderlies, which meant being out of my cell a good deal, cleaning staircases, going round with breakfast, dinner, and supper, helping to distribute medicines, and attending to the men who were confined to bed through illness. I found these duties no hardship, and though I was obliged to do some rather dirty work, yet I looked on it as a godsend, as the more one has to do, the better it is for one's mind. I kept up my spirits, and made the best of things, and time began to pass much more rapidly.

By the month of May I was so much better that I was transferred to 'A' hall, where all the able-

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bodied 'star' class, or first offenders are ; and I joined one of the full-labour farm parties. The work I did with them was hay-making, digging potatoes, and carting manure, and other kinds of farm work. In the carting, as a rule, no horses are employed, but the men draw the cart, harnessed two by two to a long rope. I frankly say this was the part I liked best. The open-air exercise and the variety were a positive delight after the monotony of crawling along with the hospital party, and as for the supposed degradation of drawing a cart, it made no earthly difference to me, since I had to serve my sentence, whether I pulled at the rope or whether I sat on the top and drove the horse, as a free farm-labourer does. Why should it be more degrading to pull a cart than it is to push a barrow? I never felt any repulsion from any kind of prison work, but from the beginning I made up my mind to do what I was told to do, and to the best of my strength, and I found this was far the best way.

In a debate in Parliament on prison treatment some years ago the Irish members who had been in prison made a great fuss about the kind of work they had had to do. Mr. Michael Davitt complained most loudly of all. He had undergone a

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long term of penal servitude, and after his release he was elected to the House of Commons. In the course of this debate he created a sensation by mentioning that, whilst at Portland, it had been part of his work to be harnessed daily to a cart, as if he were a mule or a horse, and to drag stones this way and that, for hour after hour. Mr. Davitt is a one-armed man, and that was probably the reason why he was put to carting, as so few employments are open to men with his deficiency. But it was proved that his health did not suffer; and I can personally testify that carting is infinitely preferable to moping in a cell. I have heard of a well-to-do German *bauer* driving a plough with his old wife and cow in double harness, and distributing his whip impartially between them. At least, we were never whipped.

The summer of 1899 was very hot, and after three months' working out on the farm I got so knocked up, and some varicose veins I suffered from became so inflamed, I had to go back to hospital, where I remained for about two months. During this time I was quite unfit for out-of-door work, and could take very little exercise at all. I therefore spent nearly the whole day knitting, which helped to pass the time away. Many of



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the men in hospital were content to do nothing, but others were only too glad to get employment, no matter what. For my own part, it was everything to me to keep the mind employed, and to think as little as possible on what had been and what could never be again. However, better times were coming, as I had now been in prison a year and eight months, nearly half the actual length of my term.

## V

### BETTER DAYS, AND THE END

IN October, 1899, I was considered fit for work again, but as I was still a mere scarecrow, the medical officer considered I had better remain in 'B' hall, so that I could have extra diet when necessary, without being admitted into the hospital as a regular patient. I therefore went out to work again in my old party on the farm, and again became one of the orderlies in 'B' hall infirmary; but I was treated exactly the same as the other men, with the exception of having a cell which was usually reserved for hospital patients. I continued to work out on the farm till January, but then the labour of digging when the ground was frozen caused my varicose veins again to become troublesome, and I was in consequence transferred to No. 24 party, consisting of printers and bookbinders. In that party I remained until the expiration of my sentence—that is, for about one year and ten months—with the exception of going

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out for one month each summer to work on the farm. Most of the men employed in the shops are allowed a change into the fresh air for a few weeks during the year, and a very wise arrangement it is. It helps to keep them in health, and it also prevents their getting stale and listless at their indoor work. Although they are at hard labour all the time they are on the farm, they look upon it as a sort of holiday, and it does them as much good. Whilst in the shops I was employed entirely in bookbinding, which becomes very interesting when one has gained a little skill at it.

As printing and bookbinding form the most important branch of industry in the prison, No. 24 party is the largest, consisting always of from fifty to sixty men. We worked at what is called the old, or upper prison, because it was used as a prison up to about fifteen years ago, before the 'A' hall was built. It is five minutes' walk from the lower prison, and it is now only used as workshops. The whole time that I was there I worked next to a young fellow whose trial twelve years ago aroused a great deal of public interest. He was then only a boy of sixteen, and his case is surely one that gives rise to grave reflections.

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When I left he had been in prison considerably over eleven years, and not only had his conduct throughout been exceptionally good, for he never gave the slightest trouble to any of the officials, but his work as a bookbinder was that of a trained expert. Any special books that required extreme care in binding, or extra ornamentation, were given to him to do, and the rapidity and neatness with which he turned out his work were extraordinary. His quick intelligence and nimble fingers were equal to any task, and he evidently had the artistic sense strongly developed. He was always trustworthy and good-tempered, and was the instructor's right-hand man. From inquiries I have since made, I learn that he could easily command a very high rate of wages when he once more regained his freedom. He is now a man of twenty-eight, and though he has the fatal letter 'L' on his arm, signifying a life sentence—that is, twenty years in prison before release, in the ordinary course—it is to be hoped the Secretary of State may take his case into consideration, and that before long he may be released and become a useful member of the community. The men working the printing-machines were in one room, and the bookbinders and compositors in another,

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two officers being in charge of the party—a warder and an assistant-warder, one or other of whom remained constantly in each room. There was also an instructor, who went from room to room overlooking the work, and showing the men how to do it properly. New hands were always placed next to old stagers, so that they might learn from them and get what help they needed. On March 1 in each year four or five men are chosen to pack up and send out the bound books and printed forms. This packing takes about five weeks. The last year I was at Parkhurst I was told off as one of the packers, and was surprised at the magnitude of the business. All the books and forms used in the convict and local prisons in England and Wales, which number between fifty and sixty, are printed and bound at Parkhurst, making altogether the formidable total of over ten thousand bound books, and over four millions of printed forms annually. Most of this bulk passed through the hands of myself and my fellow-packers. I liked being in the printers' party very much indeed. The only serious drawback was the small amount of exercise one got. Men working long hours in a heated atmosphere, heavy with the smell of gas and glue, need to have their

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lungs opened freely, and their brain well cleared every day, and some provision ought decidedly to be made for this. Under the present routine there is no exercise at all beyond the walk to and fro between the upper and lower prisons, about five minutes each way, and about twenty minutes' exercise in the upper yard on first arriving there in the morning. To some extent, perhaps, the frequent searching that takes place in the open air may serve the purpose, and it may, therefore, be convenient to describe it in connection with this subject.

Before proceeding to work, both in the morning and after dinner, all the men fall in with their respective parties, the 'stars,' or first offenders, having a separate parade ground to themselves. The men are formed up in double rank, and the order is then given to open order and right or left extend, as the case may be. The officers then search their men, each man unbuttoning his slop, coat, and waistcoat, and holding out his cap in one hand and his handkerchief in the other. While the man is in this attitude the officer passes his hands all over his body and limbs, a process technically known as 'rubbing down.' On this being completed, the parties are marched off to

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their respective places of work. The same process is repeated on the return of the parties before the men go to their cells, so that they are 'rubbed down,' or searched, four times a day. This is to make sure that they have not brought anything out of their cells, and have nothing on them but their clothes and handkerchief. In addition to these four daily searches, once a month, as a rule, sometimes oftener, the whole party are marched off, without notice, to what is called the Cockpit, in 'A' hall, which consists of about twenty cells, and each man in turn is taken into a cell, where he strips to his flannel vest, placing all his clothes outside the door, so that they may be thoroughly examined by an officer. Yet prisoners sometimes contrive to conceal articles for a long time, and the most extraordinary things are found upon them. In one case I know of a sovereign was discovered upon a man who had been in prison over a year, and who must, therefore, have been 'rubbed down' at least a thousand times, and more closely searched over and over again. I cannot explain in detail the ingenious method adopted in this instance ; but I may say the only safe depository a naked man has is his stomach, and this man had many times, in order to retain

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the coveted treasure, inflicted on himself a certain amount of physical pain. Some of the men make a great grievance of the continual searching, but personally, I could never see that it mattered in the least, save for the risk in severe weather of taking cold through the exposure, and I never heard of any ill effects from that cause. Whether it is necessary or not is another question. For my own part, I think it is. But for it the worst class of convicts, the old, practised hands, would manage to get possession of all sorts of things, and the difficulty of maintaining discipline would be enormously increased. I am sure most of the well-conducted and well-disposed convicts would agree with me that the searching does not trouble them in the slightest degree. From the brief description I have given it may be gathered that the search parade and the 'rub down' four times a day constitute a sort of drill, and if it were supplemented by a twenty minutes' exercise after dinner, as in the morning, it would, I should say, be much better for the health of the men, and there would be less grumbling. Some parties do get the afternoon exercise, but the printers were among those that did not. I have dwelt on this matter because I feel strongly that it is one where



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a great improvement can be made. The compulsory deprivation of exercise to some men engaged in indoor work is nothing less than slow torture ; but its effects are so insidious and indirect that it escapes notice when much less important features of our prison system arouse an outcry and get remedied. The seriousness of the evil is aggravated tenfold by the character of the prison diet, with which I shall deal fully in another chapter. I think that every man ought to have a full hour's exercise a day.

As the time drew near, when in all reasonable probability I should leave No. 24 party, rejoiced as I was at the prospect of liberty, I could not help feeling a strange kind of regret. I know it is largely a question of temperament ; but still, I can hardly imagine any man, not utterly brutalized, so unsociable as to be insensible of attachment to some of those among whom he has lived, and with whom he has worked, for nearly two years. I am not at all ashamed to say, for myself, that being naturally what Dr. Johnson called a 'clubbable' man, by which I suppose he meant gregarious and sympathetic, I had an *esprit de corps* towards, and a real liking for, many of the men, quite regardless of their crimes. I believe that

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'clubbability' is an innate quality of Englishmen, and that it asserts itself in a convict prison just as much, allowing for circumstances, as it does elsewhere. Certainly, we had enough variety to make a harmonious whole. I think amongst us we represented almost every class and profession. There were ex-clergymen, ex-dissenting ministers, ex-doctors, ex-solicitors—these in overwhelming proportion to the others—soldiers, sailors, school-masters, bank managers, and for a time one ex-M.P. I do not remember any ex-barristers. There may have been many, but if so, they were 'dressed up in white people's clothes,' as Artemus Ward used to say. Neither was there a single ex-catholic priest. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of the Catholic clergy, they have the knack of keeping outside of convict prisons, except when engaged in their religious duties.

Being above the middle height, I was always one of the leading file of my party, another tall prisoner being with me. This brought me into contact with three men, all of whom, curiously enough, had been soldiers. Two of them, an ex-dragoon and an ex-marine, I liked very much indeed. The third, however, an ex-artillery officer, and a giant in stature and strength, was some-

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times anything but an agreeable companion to march beside. His behaviour became at last so threatening that I had to request that we should be parted, and he was then placed in the rear of the party by himself. I learn that since I left he has gone mad, and I am not surprised.

One of the earliest experiences after entering upon prison life is being photographed in prison dress, and three months before discharge prisoners are obliged to grow their hair so that photographs may be taken showing approximately the normal appearance. Two or three weeks before discharge they are decorated with a sort of make-up collar and tie, and double-breasted dark-blue jacket, and photographs are taken of them in this costume, with their hair, moustache, and beard fully grown. This is intended to show them as they will appear in ordinary life after their release ; but it is rather foolish, because nine out of ten change their whole appearance when they get outside by shaving and dressing according to their own ideas, and according to their class. I am sure no one would recognise me now from my official portrait. However, copies of these works of art are sent to Scotland Yard and to the Home Office, together with a full description, giving height, colour of hair, eyes,

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etc., and any distinctive marks on the body. Last year, also, shortly before I left, the system of taking and registering impressions of the thumbs and fingers was introduced. This, a sort of Berthillon method, is, I believe, supposed to be an absolutely infallible means of identification ; however, I think that is open to doubt, though it may be, and certainly is, a great help towards identification.

On November 6 I did my last day's work, for though I should not be released till the morning of the 8th, I was what is called 'located' on the previous day. During the morning of the 7th I was sent for by the Governor, who informed me that I should be discharged at the gate the following morning. The medical officer also sent for me to see that I was in good health. A prisoner, on the afternoon before his release, has his prison clothes, his books, etc., taken from him, and he then has his own clothes, which have been sent him by his friends, given him, or, if he has none of his own, he is supplied with a complete outfit, consisting of hat, suit, boots, and two sets of underclothing, of the total value of £1 17s. If he prefer he may procure clothes from one of the Prisoners' Aid Societies, the Government paying

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£1 17s. towards the cost. In my case I had my clothes sent me from home. I was taken down to the stores to receive them, and to sign for them, and I then took them back to my cell. After dinner I had a bath, my convict clothes were taken from me, and I put on my own, and at once began to feel more civilized. On November 8, 1901, having earned the maximum number of marks for good conduct, without forfeiting any, I was discharged after completing three years and nine months' imprisonment. This is equivalent to a sentence of five years, as, by good conduct, a remission of one-fourth of the nominal term can be gained. I shall not soon forget that morning. I got up at 5.10 a.m. as usual, and had my last—at least, I hope it will be my last—prison breakfast, and at 7.30 a principal warder took me down to the gate. Canon C——, the Catholic chaplain, was there to meet me with a cab, and I drove off with him to Newport, and had breakfast with him there—my first decent meal since the luncheon I ordered in at Newgate after being sentenced in February, 1898. In that famous book, 'The Pleasures of Life,' Lord Avebury gives the mere animal gratification of good eating a place among the legitimate minor enjoyments that help to make

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up the sum of human happiness. But only those can appreciate it fully who have known nothing but sameness, tastelessness, and too often repulsiveness in nearly everything they have had to eat for years. After breakfast we took the train to Ryde, and I had the pleasure of Canon C——'s company to Portsmouth, where I bade him farewell. I shall never forget his great kindness to me during my sojourn at Parkhurst.

At Portsmouth I met Father M——, who had been chaplain at Parkhurst before Canon C——. He also was a true friend to me, and I owe him a deep debt of gratitude for his unfailing goodness in the earlier part of my imprisonment. The visits of priest or chaplain are at all times a perfect godsend, but never so much as during the first year of a long sentence. The eternal monotony of prison life, the loneliness with nothing to look forward to but years of the same deadly dullness, is simply appalling. I think Catholics are more fortunate than their Church of England fellow-prisoners, because of the more frequent visits of the priests. I shall, however, recur to this point later in my remarks on prison system and discipline. I will only add here that as the priests had helped to make existence bearable for me

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whilst in prison, so they were among the first to receive me and to smooth the way for me when I found myself once more in the outer world. In fact, one of them whom I had known from boyhood took the trouble to come half the way to Portsmouth to meet me, and travelled up to town with me.

On arriving in London, I went straight home, and later in the day I went to Scotland Yard to report myself, as every discharged convict is obliged to do, within twenty-four hours of his release, being nominally on ticket-of-leave until the end of his original sentence.

The only ex-convicts who have no ticket-of-leave, and are, therefore, absolutely free on release, are soldiers and sailors who have been sentenced by court-martial, and those who from bad conduct in prison have had to serve every day of their sentence. The next month I petitioned the Secretary of State to have my ticket remitted, which he very kindly consented to. I was then once more absolutely free.

## VI

### GOVERNORS AND DEPUTY-GOVERNORS

FROM the preceding chapters a general idea may be gained of the discipline and life in a convict prison, but in order to convey a clearer impression, and to make some of the subsequent descriptions more intelligible, it may be as well to give a precise account of the official organization, followed by the details of the daily routine.

The ruler of the prison is the Governor, who is usually, but not necessarily, a retired military or naval man, and who has previously gained a long experience in the rank of Deputy-Governor. He wields almost absolute power within the prison, all his subordinates being required to yield him implicit obedience, they having no authority except what they derive from him, and no responsibility except to him. The Governor himself, however, is responsible to the Prison Directors—a specially appointed body forming a branch of the Home Office under the Secretary of State—and is



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strictly bound by the Home Office regulations. These form, as it were, the constitution of the prison, and have the force of law. Thus, though nominally an autocrat, the Governor is in reality, subject to several checks, the most effective of which are, firstly, the regulations ; secondly, the Prison Directors ; and, thirdly, the Visiting Magistrates. If he exceeds his powers under the regulations in the smallest degree he can be made to answer for it, since every officer and convict has the right to petition the Secretary of State, and to make any complaint he pleases to the Directors, who are altogether independent of the Governor. These important personages are highly-paid officials, and their authority is almost unlimited. As one of the Directors visits every prison once a month, their supervision is by no means a mere form. Among them they possess complete knowledge of all that goes on. The moment a Director enters a prison the Governor becomes a secondary personage, and has to report to him everything of importance that has taken place since the last visit, and has to produce books, records, and every other sort of information or disclosure that he may require. All requests or complaints on the part of officers or convicts, notice of which has to be

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given beforehand, are deliberately considered by the Director at a sort of court, where the Governor is present, and where the officer or convict is invited to state his request or complaint, and is allowed to plead his own cause. The Director either gives his decision then and there, or defers it for further consideration, and it is practically final. It is duly recorded by a prison clerk, so that there may be no mistake as to its being carried out. The time has long gone by when even the most imperious or self-willed Governor would venture to exercise his power according to his own caprice.

It might be thought that this dual control would cause confusion and weaken the authority of the Governor, but, as a matter of fact, it works very well in practice. It furnishes a very real safeguard against tyranny, and this is enhanced by the functions of the Visiting Magistrates. These are not paid officials at all, but are unpaid Justices of the peace, who visit the prisons once a month to award punishments for the more serious class of prison offences. The Governor, of course, has power to inflict slighter penalties for breaches of discipline or other delinquencies which need to be dealt with on the spot. But beyond that the

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power of punishment is entirely in the hands of the Visiting Justices. At each of their visits every serious prison offence has to be reported to them, and it is for them to say what punishment shall be suffered by the offender. The Governor is not supposed to have any voice in the matter at all. Every prisoner undergoing punishment at the time of the visit, moreover, can be seen in his cell by the Magistrates. Under this system there is no possibility, nor even any suspicion, of wanton or arbitrary cruelty.

Prison punishments, doubtless, are sometimes very severe, and they need to be; but in all serious cases it is not the Governor who punishes, but the Magistrates, who cannot possibly have any reason for showing animus or undue severity.

Finally, there are the Inspectors of Prisons, officials of the Home Office, who make a round of the prisons every few months, and as these gentlemen are all old prison Governors themselves, it would be very difficult indeed for a Governor to conceal any sort of dark doings from their keen insight.

All the stories that one reads or hears of horrors and atrocities in prison, therefore, are either sheer inventions, or else refer to a state of

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things that has long since been reformed out of existence.

Yet, with all these securities against oppression or active ill-treatment, human nature is human nature, and, whether in the higher or the lower grades of the prison service, the personal qualities, habits of mind, and even outward manners of individual officers make an indescribable difference in the lot of those who are under their charge day after day, month after month, and year after year. One will make himself hated and dreaded, or else cordially distrusted and despised, whilst another will command the respect and confidence of everybody under him, although both may be regarded as first-rate men by the Home Office. I found this so at Parkhurst, and it is no doubt so in prisons which I only know by hearsay.

During the term of my imprisonment I came in contact with four Governors and five Deputy-Governors. The Deputy-Governor, I should say, is the lieutenant, or second in command, of the Governor, and in the absence of the Governor from any cause he actually takes his place and exercises his full powers. The first Governor I had to do with was Colonel M——, who at that time was Governor at Holloway and Newgate

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prisons. From the little I had to do with him I liked him very much, but my intercourse with him ceased on the day of my conviction. The Governor of Wormwood Scrubs, Captain P——, was away on sick-leave nearly the whole of the seven weeks I was there, and consequently I did not see him more than three or four times.

The Governor who was at Parkhurst when I arrived in 1898 was Colonel P——. To my great regret, he retired in August, 1900, after more than thirty years' service. Colonel P—— was decidedly one of the most kind-hearted men it has ever been my fortune to come across, and I have no hesitation in saying that many men who have turned over a new leaf and become respectable members of the community owe their regeneration entirely to his influence. Every Thursday morning Colonel P—— used to give the prisoners a short address in the chapel. Being a Catholic, I naturally did not attend the Church of England services, but I have heard many a man say—and, in fact, it was generally acknowledged—that these little addresses were far more appreciated and made more impression than the sermons of any of the chaplains. The kindness and sympathy Colonel P—— showed me in time of trouble on

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two occasions when I lost very near relatives I shall never forget. He did all he possibly could to help those who tried to help themselves, and he would always stretch a point to comply with a prisoner's request, if he saw his way. Yet he was by no means a soft man who could be taken advantage of. On the contrary, he could punish with great severity the hopelessly incorrigible class, on whom kindness is utterly thrown away. In short, he was a Governor who took a very serious view of his duties, and who made it a matter of conscience to do as much good in his time as he possibly could.

Yet every man has his defects, and there were two points in which I think Colonel P—— fell short. He did not give enough personal attention to the food, but trusted too much to the capacity and integrity of his steward, not realizing that such over-confidence was bad for the steward and bad for the prisoners. There are few offices more open to abuse, unless closely watched from day to day, than that of steward of a large prison; and there are few in which negligence causes more suffering.

Secondly, Colonel P—— allowed himself at times to be unduly influenced in his treatment of

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the subordinate officers by one of the principal warders. He believed everything this man told him, and too often acted upon it, when his own judgment would have been a safer guide. This is a weakness commonly found in men otherwise of strong character—the inclination to rely implicitly on some one person far inferior to themselves. This principal warder was a well-intentioned man, and he was certainly a good friend to the prisoners; but, like all tale-bearers, he lacked the necessary discretion for exercising authority over others, and when he was promoted later to be chief warder in another prison this disqualification showed itself markedly enough.

On Colonel P——'s retirement, the post of Governor was filled by Captain E. W——, in some ways an unsuitable appointment. Coming direct from Borstal to Parkhurst, he was a striking example of the proverbial round peg in a square hole. Borstal was then a convict prison for habitual offenders only, no first offenders ever being sent there, nor any invalids or imbeciles retained there. Its inmates were nearly all able-bodied convicts, very different from those at Parkhurst. The latter is, in fact, without exception, the most difficult of all the convict prisons to

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manage ; and for one man who is fit to be Governor there ten might be found who would do perfectly well for Borstal. Parkhurst is partly a lunatic asylum, and partly a hospital or infirmary, with only a small percentage of able-bodied men. Out of the 800 prisoners, nearly a hundred are recognised as weak-minded, and a large proportion of the remainder are not physically sound. It stands to reason that no rigid rule can be applied to such a miscellaneous collection. It is the spirit rather than the strict letter of the regulations that has to be observed at Parkhurst, and a Governor who cannot very soon see that must be wanting in some of the essential qualifications of character and training. This is equally true as to the treatment of the officers, because conduct on their part which would amount to breach of discipline or neglect of duty at Borstal might very likely be quite excusable, or might even be commendable, at Parkhurst.

Captain E—— W—— evidently did not understand this in the least. He took the intelligent and elastic methods of working the prison which Colonel P—— had bequeathed to him for mere laxity of discipline, and he began immediately to set things straight according to his own ideas and



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with an exceedingly heavy hand. His manners towards the officers also left much to be desired—at least, as far as I could judge, I thought so. When a man went before him to make some application, it did not seem to make any difference whether the request were reasonable or not, or whether the man's conduct whilst in prison had been without reproach or not. The Governor seemed to assume, as a matter of course, that he was an ill-conditioned prisoner deserving punishment instead of indulgence, and invariably refused his application, if he could possibly do so. He gave the impression of being afraid lest the men should get the upper hand if he did not constantly cow them. I have seen men who had gone before him to make some application come back boiling with rage and ready to do any mad thing against him. I could enter into their feelings to a certain extent from my own experience when I made an application which he refused before he had half heard what I had to say. It was only a small thing. I wished to give the medical officer some particulars in writing about my health, and I asked to be allowed a sheet of paper and pen and ink in my cell for that purpose. When I had got as far as asking for the paper and pen and ink, and before

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I could get the words out of my mouth to say why I wanted them, the Governor shut me up with a curt 'Certainly not!' It was not so much the refusal, as the tone and manner, that I felt. Prisoners have their feelings, like other people, and I brooded over this for hours, thinking what a pleasure it would be to punch his head. I once heard an old man coming upstairs who had been before the Governor to ask for something, which, I conclude, had been refused, say to the officer taking him back to his cell : 'The new Governor evidently thinks he's God Almighty, and we are the fallen angels.' Anything less like an angel, fallen or otherwise, to look at, though he was a poor, harmless wretch, I cannot imagine. I do not think any of His Satanic Majesty's immediate attendants could have given him many points, so far as an evil countenance went. Yet his epigram about the Governor was true in substance, if not in fact. There was more wit in it than the old man knew.

It was quite in accordance with Captain E——W——'s theory of prison management that he should inflict punishment having no ratio to the offence. Coming from Borstal to Parkhurst with a distorted vision, everything appeared so out of focus that he could not distinguish between

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maximum and minimum. Some of his first punishments were simply out of all reason. I will give an instance which quickly became known throughout the prison. There is a rule that nothing must be thrown out of the cell ventilators on to the parade, some prisoners having a propensity for disposing of surplus food, or other things, in that way. But unless done for sheer mischief or insubordination, it was looked on as a trifling matter.

On this occasion a boy of sixteen or seventeen was brought before the Governor charged with having thrown some scraps of bread through his ventilator to feed the birds. For this slight offence against discipline the miserable lad was sentenced to two days' bread and water in the punishment cells, and fined eighty-four marks, involving the loss of eleven days' 'remission'—in other words, two days' starvation and eleven days' extra imprisonment—for the heinous crime of trying to feed the sparrows! It is just this kind of treatment in small matters that causes at times great dissatisfaction and tends to make prisoners go from bad to worse, when they have been unduly punished.

Before Captain E—— W—— came it was the practice for the Deputy-Governors, taking their

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cue, I suppose, from Colonel P——, at times to go round visiting the men who were ill in hospital, and speaking a few words to cheer them up. No one who has not been shut up in a cell for weeks can realize what a blessing any spontaneous kindness like this is, or how much good it does. To Captain E—— W——, however, with his cast-iron notions, it seemed a most irregular proceeding, totally subversive of authority, and calculated to lead to conspiracy, prison-breach, or Heaven knows what other terrible consequences. He, therefore, included in his sweeping reforms an edict forbidding the Deputy-Governor to visit any man who had not previously made a formal request to see him on business. Here is an illustration of Captain E—— W——'s short-sightedness. Each prisoner is allowed to have two books a week from the prison library, but when I went to Parkhurst the library was in such a deplorable state that this was scarcely any privilege at all. In 1899 myself and some others got our friends to petition the Home Office for leave to send books in to us, subject, of course, to the approval of the authorities. This was granted on condition that after we had read the books they were to become the property of the prison library, which thus benefited

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greatly both in number and in quality of books. One of the books which I had was Whitaker's Almanack, and this I was allowed to keep in my cell as a book of reference. The following year, however, when my new Whitaker came, and several other men had the same, the Governor objected to our receiving them, and they were accordingly withheld. I asked the chaplain, who had charge of the library, what objection there could be to our receiving the Whitakers, and he told me that in his opinion there was absolutely none. Apart from its value as a book of reference, he considered it a truly educational book, on account of the amount of useful knowledge it supplies. One of the men, who, like myself, had had Whitaker sent him, but was not allowed to receive it, went to the Governor and asked him why the book had been stopped. The Governor curtly refused to give any reason, merely saying that the man was not to have it. The man consequently went to see the Director on his next visit, and the Director told him there was something in the book which was deemed undesirable for prisoners to read. I have since searched Whitaker for 1901, from cover to cover, and I think it would be very difficult for the prison officials to

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point out where the undesirable information is given. Shortly after this all leave for having books from outside was withdrawn and a most hopeful attempt to improve the library was brought abruptly to an end.

Captain E—— W—— seemed to have been born half a century too late, though under the old régime he might have made a most excellent prison Governor. Certainly I believe he changed a good deal for the better before I left, but, personally, after my first interview with him I determined to have no more to do with him than I could help. Except, therefore, when he sent for me to communicate the death of a relation, or on one or two occasions when I was ill, and he made some inquiry about my condition, I kept altogether clear of him until just before my release. I was then obliged to go before him to make certain *pro formâ* applications—as, for example, for permission to have my own clothes sent to me in readiness for my discharge.

Having thus frankly recorded my unfavourable impressions of Captain E—— W——, I think it right to add that he instituted a reform during my time at Parkhurst which was much appreciated, and should have lasting effects. He conferred a

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benefit on the 'star' class—the first offenders—by opening several additional working parties to them. This may need a word of explanation. When he became Governor there were only five parties in which 'star' men were allowed to work—Nos. 12, 18, 24, 28, and 30—a number absurdly out of proportion, considering that there were over thirty working parties of all kinds, and that the 'star' class formed nearly a third of those capable of working.

It should be understood that the first offenders do not work with the old convicts, so that there being so few parties allotted to them, there was very little choice of employments for them, and many had to be put to trades to which they were unsuited, and a knowledge of which would be of no use to them after their discharge. It is to Captain E—— W——'s credit that he tried to remedy this defect by creating three or four additional 'star' parties, which is probably as much as can be done until a thorough system of classification of convicts is adopted, when the distribution of work will be placed on an entirely different footing.

As regards the Deputy-Governors, I saw very little of Major H——, who was Deputy-Governor

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of Holloway the few days I was there, as he left almost immediately on my arrival.

The Deputy-Governor at Wormwood Scrubs, Mr. N——, who, shortly after I left, was promoted to be Governor of Portsmouth Prison, I saw continually, and have the highest respect for, not only personally, but also because of the manner in which he discharged his official duties and treated the men generally. Although he could be stern enough to ill-conditioned prisoners, yet he was very discerning, and he often gave a word of encouragement to those whom he saw were doing their best. I consider that any prison would be fortunate to have him as a Governor, for he was so much looked up to and liked by the subordinate officers of all ranks that matters should be bound to work smoothly.

The next Deputy-Governor I met, Captain F——, at Parkhurst, also seemed a very good sort of man. He was, I believe, very strict with badly-disposed prisoners, but I know that he was most kind in visiting the men who were in hospital. For about eighteen months I acted as assistant-orderly in the hospital, and was, therefore, a good deal out of my cell, and I had better opportunities of seeing what was going on and of judging the



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methods of the authorities than the great majority of the prisoners. Captain F—— was succeeded by Captain H——, for whom, I have no hesitation in saying, everyone had a good word, except that peculiar class of persons who can never see good in anyone. Captain H—— also gave very severe punishment to the incorrigibles, but he would always do anything in his power to make the lot of the well-conducted prisoners easier and lighter. His manner to officers and prisoners alike was always perfectly courteous and wellbred. More than once I heard a prisoner coming away from an interview with Captain H—— remark : ‘ Oh, he’s a real gentleman, is No. 2 ; but I’ll be —— if No. 1 is ! ’ Colloquially, ‘ No. 1 ’ means the Governor, and ‘ No. 2 ’ the Deputy-Governor.

About two months before my discharge, Captain H—— left Parkhurst, and was appointed Deputy-Governor of one of the large London prisons, whence he has since been promoted to be a Governor. Wherever he goes I wish him well. I feel certain that, as in the case of Mr. N——, any prison under his control will be worked smoothly and capably, for the reason that he is full of those most essential qualities for a Governor of a prison—tact and discrimination.

## VII

### OFFICERS

THE term 'officer' in convict prisons is applied to the chief warders, principal warders, warders, and assistant-warders. In point of authority, the chief warden comes immediately below the Deputy-Governor, and his position is a powerful and responsible one. He has the direction of the subordinate officers, and this gives him to a great extent the control of the inner working of the prison. The chief warders are chosen from the principal warders, having previously passed through all the different grades. The superior officers are a class of men differing a great deal in qualifications, and also differing a great deal in regard to their treatment of their subordinate officers and the prisoners.

In the course of nearly four years' experience I came in contact with a large number of officers of one kind or another, and, with a few exceptions, I formed a high opinion of them personally, and also

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of the methods on which they worked. I may safely say that during the whole time of my imprisonment I only came in contact with one officer whom I actually disliked. I shall refer to him later. I will now deal with the chief warders and principal warders.

Though I was only at Holloway a few days, and then had not been tried, yet I was able to judge to a certain extent what sort of man the chief warder was, and I have nothing but good to say of him. I formed a most favourable opinion indeed of all the officers I had to do with at Holloway. At Wormwood Scrubs I was in hospital the whole time, and I do not think I saw the chief warder more than once or twice; but I have no hesitation in saying that the principal warder, Mr. L——, in charge of the infirmary, was one of the best men for that important position it is possible to imagine. Though strict, he was kindness itself to all the sick prisoners, and under him they had every consideration that was allowable.

The first chief warder who was at Parkhurst in my time was an exceedingly pleasant man to talk to, if one had any application to make, and was kind to the prisoners, but he had one great draw-

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back. Among the subordinate officers two or three were special favourites of his, and these invariably plied him with tittle-tattle about the others, which he believed. He also encouraged prisoners to tell tales of one another—a most pernicious practice. When I had been there eight or nine months he came to my cell one day and asked me something about another man. I told him quite straight out, though naturally with perfect civility, that, supposing I did know anything, I certainly was not going to play the spy on my fellow-prisoners or on the officers, as I was sent to prison to be punished, and it was no part of the punishment that I should get other people into trouble. He left Parkhurst not long after, and the post of chief warder was temporarily filled by the senior principal warder, Mr. H——, as cheery and jolly a man as ever I met. He was always ready to listen to any request a prisoner had to ask him, and was always willing to get a man anything he was really entitled to have. It was while he was acting chief warder that the food was so bad, and on several occasions I heard him speak very strongly about the injustice of serving out such stuff to the prisoners. In fact, he was always on the look-out for their interests. He

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was also popular with most of the subordinate officers, because he was always perfectly straight with them. He had only one fault—he used to shout too much at his officers on parade. It was more a habit than anything else, but it did not sound well, and it gave quite a wrong impression of him, for there was nothing violent about him except his voice. After acting as chief warder for a few months, he was transferred to Portland as senior principal warder, and was succeeded by the next principal warder to him, Mr. B——, who acted as chief warder until a permanent appointment was made. Mr. B—— was also a very good officer as far as treatment of the prisoners went. He was always willing to hear complaints and to do what he could for the men. I recollect the first day I went out on the farm he was in charge of the parties working on the land, and he called me up to him and told me he would like to give me a little advice. ‘Of course,’ he said, ‘you want to keep as clear as you can, so as to have a clean sheet and not get into trouble. Therefore, make yourself your own officer. I mean by that watch the men and the officers, notice what the officers have to speak about to the men, and avoid what you see they reprimand the men for doing.’ I

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thought this kind of him, for a few words of advice, judiciously given, may be a great help to a man who has not yet got into the way of the work. Good as he was to the prisoners, however, the methods he employed sometimes with the subordinate officers were anything but right or just. I cannot imagine a man in the position in which he was placed supposing for one moment that such methods could succeed. I firmly believe that if Mr. B—— had been made chief warder at Parkhurst, as for some weeks seemed likely, a large number of officers would have asked to be transferred to some other prison, or else would have sent in their papers and applied for their discharge. However, at the end of that year, Mr. P——, the senior principal warder at Dartmoor, was appointed chief warder at Parkhurst, and remained for nearly a year and a half, when he went back to Dartmoor as chief warder. He was a good straightforward man, and decidedly disapproved of tales being carried, or of any underhand work. In 1900 Mr. B—— was appointed to be chief warder at Borstal, and I overheard a warder say he would make any bet he would not stay there long. The prophecy came true, for he retired from the service in a few months. Personally, I liked Mr. B——,

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but, as I have said, the way in which he treated his subordinates was absolutely all wrong, and proved that he was not the right man to hold such a high post in a prison. He very nearly lost his life, by-the-by, at the hands of a violent prisoner whilst a principal warder at Parkhurst. But I cannot say that that was through any fault of his own. I shall describe the incident in another chapter.

The last chief warder I had anything to do with was Mr. M——, who was promoted from principal warder a few months before my discharge. I happened to see a good deal of him, as, after I had been at Parkhurst a few months, he was the principal warder in charge of 'B' hall, where I was then located, and remained as such for several months. I certainly entertained a great respect for him, for, though he was very strict, almost to the point of severity, both with the officers and with the prisoners, and exceedingly reserved in his manner, yet he was invariably just, and absolutely above any meanness or double-dealing. He had no favourites among the officers, but insisted on having his own ideas carried out; and for the most part his ideas were excellent. It is to be hoped that he will always continue to work on

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the same principles, and not allow others to in any way turn him from the straightforward way in which he was working when I left Parkhurst. The remarks I have made about Mr. B—— apply almost as much to two of the principal warders who were at Parkhurst when I left. Personally, I liked them, but the way in which they treated the younger officers was altogether wrong. I am well aware that there must be strict discipline in prison, but, on the other hand, it is impossible to insure everything going exactly like clockwork ; and it is absolutely essential that the principal warders shall sometimes overlook slight irregularities, at Parkhurst especially. For instance, if an officer has a party of, say, twenty or twenty-five men to look after, he cannot keep his eye on every one of them at the same moment. Men who have been shut up all alone for two-thirds of the twenty-four hours will, if they can, seize an opportunity of saying a few words to a fellow human being. When a principal warder appears on the scene, therefore, and sees any of the men speaking or doing any little thing they should not, if he is wise, he will quietly draw the attention of the officer to the fact, and take no further notice, because it may not be the officer's fault at



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all. Other principal warders, however, such as those I have alluded to, never make any allowance for anything. Their one idea seemed to me to be, not so much to maintain discipline as to catch the officers tripping, and get them into trouble. I have known them give an officer a 'half-sheet'—in other words, report him to the higher prison authorities, with the risk of being fined or otherwise punished—for the most absurd things, and sometimes without any justification at all. The effect of this excessive sharpness and severity is to make young officers sometimes nervous and flurried, and it has a tendency in some to make them unnecessarily hard on the prisoners. As it is, I think the perpetual silence is most infamous. It is against nature, and it cannot possibly be strictly enforced. Most men can no more be prevented from talking if they get the chance than they can be prevented from breathing. It would surely be much better for everyone if this were recognised and a certain amount of conversation were openly allowed, the officer, of course, having the discretion to stop it when necessary, so that it may not interfere with the work. The authorities are gradually coming round to this view. When I first went to Parkhurst no talking was allowed

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under any circumstances, but under the new regulations of April, 1900, men who had reached the 'blue-collar' stage—that is, who have done three full years in prison with good conduct—were allowed to walk and talk together for about three-quarters of an hour on Sunday afternoon. Several Governors, and among them the present Governor of Parkhurst, strongly disapproved of this concession. But it was only in accordance with common-sense, and, sooner or later, I trust it will be extended, within reasonable limits, to week-days. Until that is done there will always be trouble with the officers through insisting on their trying to suppress human nature. I remember on one occasion an officer in charge of one of the 'balmy' or weak-minded parties received a half-sheet for allowing the men to talk. Now, it is clearly understood that the weak-minded prisoners may talk, for the very sufficient reason that, not being responsible, there is no way of stopping them short of gagging them. Yet a principal warder reported the officer, and sought to have him punished. But he went too far. The officer immediately went to the medical officer, and placed the matter before him, with the result that the half-sheet was withdrawn and the

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principal warder was reprimanded. In my opinion, he ought to have been fined as well, as that is a punishment which is perpetually being inflicted on the junior officers for the slightest slackness in their duty. Some of the principal warders also are far too apt to interfere with the officers who have control of the infirmary, which has, in reality, nothing whatever to do with them. This ought never to be allowed, for it causes great friction. Moreover, the principal warder in charge of the infirmary is a very capable man, and quite up to managing his own staff without interference from the discipline officers. The proof that there is no necessity for principal warders to behave in the way I have described is that some of them get on excellently without doing anything of the sort. One of these whom I had to do with was Mr. W——, as tactful and good a man as I ever came across anywhere. No one could say he was not strict, but he was always just and sensible, and always willing to do what he could to help a man along, whether officer or prisoner. I have a specially pleasant recollection of him, because, on every occasion but two, he took me to my visits; that is to say, when my relations paid me a visit, he always came to fetch me. Of course, he had

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to sit in the room while the visitors were there. The room was a small one, and consequently he could hear all that was said ; but so little did he obtrude himself that we quite forgot his presence. He was a very well-educated man, and a gentleman in every sense of the word. Wherever he goes or whatever he does, I wish him good luck.

Another good principal warder was Mr. M——. If either an officer or a prisoner did anything wrong he let him know it, and did not mince his words. But, though rough and ready, he was absolutely fair and straightforward, and a rebuke from him could never be taken in ill part. He would never dream of playing a dirty trick on any subordinate, or taking a mean advantage. His sound common-sense taught him that it is sometimes necessary to overlook slight shortcomings, as it is impossible for an officer to have his eyes everywhere ; and what is of even more importance, he realized that, unless some of the prisoners were to a certain extent trusted, it would be impracticable for the work of the prison to go on. In this respect we might very well take a lesson from some of the American States, notably New York ; but that opens up too large a question to be dealt

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with here. Another really good straightforward principal warder was Mr. R——.

The only instance whilst I was at Parkhurst of an officer of a lower rank than warder being promoted to being a principal warder was when one of the gatekeepers was suddenly given that high position, and it certainly was a very strange appointment, as the man in question knew absolutely nothing of the duties of a principal warder when in charge of a hall, and had for weeks to have one of the warders by his side to show him what to do. When he was first promoted he was often in 'B' hall, where I was, and either the master-shoemaker or the master-tailor—both most excellent officers, who belonged to that hall—had perpetually to be referred to by him as to what he must do. Sometimes they had to fly downstairs off their wards to correct some order that he had given, which was all wrong. He was a very quiet, inoffensive man, but not the right man in the right place, and why he was jumped over all the warders' heads goodness knows, as his qualifications for such a post were nil.

With regard to the warders and assistant-warders, taking them as a body, I do not think they could possibly be improved upon. It was

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a wonder to me that they got such a good class of men to join the prison service. For the first few years it is neither more nor less than a dog's life, owing to the insane delight some of the principal warders take in harassing newly-joined officers. Many really valuable and blameless men are driven out of the service through not being properly handled by their superior officers in the first instance. Many of the warders and assistant-warders are old soldiers or old sailors, and the only thing that induces them to join the service, I suppose, is the prospect of retiring on a pension after a certain number of years. Their work is incessant ; their hours are very long ; and their pay is decidedly not too high. Not only that, but their responsibility is very great, and they are always on the strain lest they should incur unjust punishment for some trivial breach of discipline which they cannot avoid.

One of the best officers I came across, and one that I had a great deal to do with, was an old sailor, who was a nurse in the infirmary—Mr. Y——. Nothing ever upset his equanimity ; he was exactly the same from one day to the next ; and though he had a great deal to put up with, he did everything he could to help the men who were ill. Absolutely

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trustworthy and straightforward, and possessed of a large amount of common-sense, he was really much more fitted for the management of prisoners than many of his superior officers. In contrast with him was the man I spoke of in the early part of this chapter as the only officer I actually disliked. He was an assistant-warder at Wormwood Scrubs, and was a nuisance alike to his brother officers and to the prisoners who had the misfortune to be in his charge. He was always looking out for any little oversight on the part of others in order that he might report it and so get the reputation of being an exceptionally smart officer. The authorities probably took his measure pretty accurately, but if ever he were to be promoted to principal warder, it would be a calamity for any prison he happened to be in. Before concluding this chapter, I wish to say that any chief warder or principal warder trying to enforce discipline at Parkhurst on the same strict lines as are in force at Dartmoor, Portland, and Borstal must be wanting not only in tact, but in common-sense. You cannot put the four prisons on the same footing, and anyone who tries to do so ought at once to be removed, as he is doing much more harm than good.

## VIII

### DOCTORS AND CLERGY

THE position of the medical staff in convict prisons is very remarkable. In some respects they are more powerful than the Governor or even the Directors, for though they have no authority over the general discipline of the prison, they have entire control of the men in hospital, and they also have absolute discretion in all cases of punishment. No Governor or Visiting Magistrate can order a prisoner to be punished unless the medical officer passes him fit for it. The same rule applies to all manner of work. Every prisoner has the right to see the medical officer once a week, and the doctor any day he pleases, and it is entirely for the medical officer to say whether he is in a condition to do the work to which it is proposed to put him, or to which he has been put. It is also for the doctors to decide whether or not a prisoner is to be considered weak-minded and treated accordingly; and though the ordinary



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dietary scale is fixed by regulation, the doctors can vary it a very great deal in hospital. It will be seen, therefore, that the medical staff are in touch with the everyday life of the prisoners at a great many different points, and their influence over the management of the prison is far-reaching and incessant.

In each convict prison there is a medical officer and one doctor, but at Parkhurst, owing to the large number of sick and weak-minded prisoners, there is an additional doctor.

When I was at Holloway, I saw very little of the doctor, as I was only there a few days, but I must say he was very kind indeed to me. On my arrival at Wormwood Scrubs, I was received by Dr. G——. I little thought then that I was making the acquaintance of a man whom I should have much to do with throughout nearly my whole sentence.

As I have explained in an earlier chapter, I was ill almost all the time I was at Wormwood Scrubs, and as the medical officer there, Dr. P——, was just about leaving the service, I found myself every day under the care of Dr. G——. I cannot speak too highly of the attention I received from him.

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At Parkhurst Dr. Q—— was the medical officer, but in August, 1898, to my great surprise, Dr. G—— came as first doctor, and I saw him constantly until my discharge in November, 1901. The more I saw of him, the better I liked him, and the more I was impressed by his qualifications for his post. Not only was he very able as a doctor, but his method of treating men was the best of any I came across whilst in prison. He seemed to have a natural faculty for combining gentleness with firmness, and it was very difficult for any man to deceive him or take advantage of him.

The medical officer, Dr. Q——, was also exceedingly kind to me, as he was to all the men in the infirmary, and I have a high opinion of him; but I thought he was too indulgent in some cases where it was least deserved or appreciated. That is to say, there were men kept in the infirmary from one year's end to another, without doing a stroke of work, who might very well have been sent out at least to do a few weeks' work in summer. Men of this class as a rule give most trouble to the officers. If they are sure they will not be set to work, they are always complaining of the food, trying to stir up discontent among

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the men, and making the very most of their position to cause annoyance. If they were sent out to work, even occasionally, and had the regular discipline, they would be more apt to remember where they really were, which many of them appear to forget.

In another chapter I will relate my experience with some of this sort with whom I was brought into contact. They are to be found in every prison, I suppose, but, of course, are most numerous at Parkhurst; and it is an important part of a medical officer's task to know how to deal with them. On the other hand, if a really strong man was admitted to the hospital, he was apt to be discharged too soon—before he had really regained his health. Many a man who has great physical strength has not a correspondingly strong constitution, and though he may seem to have got over the particular complaint he was brought in for, he may yet be far from fit to go back to work. This I think Dr. Q—— sometimes overlooked, whereas Dr. G——'s theory was that, if a man were ill enough to be admitted, he should have full time to feed up after his recovery, so that the hospital diet might do him lasting good, and he might return to work really strong and well.

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One of the great difficulties the doctors have to contend with is the total absence of green vegetables from the dietary. The number of men suffering from indigestion, boils, rashes, etc., from this cause, is enormous, and though the doctor can order cabbage for men who are actually in hospital, it is not easy to undo the ill-effects already accruing from the want of vegetable food. This is a thing that ought always to be taken into account when sending men back to work who are apparently cured. It would have been better, too, if Dr. Q—— had not allowed officers, who had nothing whatever to do with the management of the infirmary, to come and interfere with the prisoners there. If he had simply put his foot down, and resolutely forbidden any such intrusion, it would have been stopped at once, and a deal of trouble would have been saved, because, in the infirmaries, the medical officers' word is law. Dr. G—— who, of course, was in supreme command when the medical officer was away on leave, never permitted outside officers to interfere with the nurses.

On one occasion, I recollect, when he was in charge, a man who was in 'B' hall infirmary was suddenly visited by a principal warder and another

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officer, and was what is called 'turned over.' He had been in hospital for some time with a bad attack of influenza, and was not yet allowed out to exercise, though he was up and dressed. He was now made to strip naked, and his clothes were searched, and his cell thoroughly examined. No doubt it was suspected that he had something hidden about him that he ought not to have had. Whether anything was found or not I do not know; but that has nothing to do with the case. When Dr. G—— visited the hospital next morning, and the nurse in charge of the ward told him what had happened, he was extremely annoyed, and he gave orders that for the future, whenever he was in charge, in the absence of the medical officer, no inmate of the infirmary should be searched without his leave first being obtained, as in some cases it might be injurious to a man's health.

On another occasion there was a man in the infirmary suffering from a very bad form of heart disease, who had not been allowed to take the slightest exercise, unless to walk about the ward for a few minutes each day. The morning for his discharge arrived, and the nurse was going to take him up to his friends in London, as, of course, a

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man in that state was not fit to travel alone. The warder nurse, Mr. S——, sent down to the prison gate to say that when the cab arrived it was to come into the prison and up to the hospital door, so that the man should be able to get straight into it and drive away. One of the principal warders, however, whose duty that week happened to be looking after the inside of the prison, refused to allow the cab to drive in, and sent word that the man must walk down to the gate and get into the cab there. The distance was not great, perhaps a little more than a hundred yards, but a man in that condition ought not to have been allowed to walk at all. When Dr. Q—— heard of it, he was highly indignant, and the matter was reported to the Governor, who gave the principal warder a most severe reprimand. If the medical officer had all along been as firm as Dr. G—— was in prohibiting the discipline officers from interfering with the hospital staff, no such thing would have occurred, for it was nothing but a piece of unnecessary officiousness.

Another doctor I came across, Dr. C——, was at Parkhurst when I first arrived there, but left shortly afterwards on being promoted to be medical officer at Borstal. I did not see much of

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him, but what little I did I liked very much, and he was a favourite with the men generally. He had rather a funny way of speaking, and always pronounced 'er' at the end of his words broadly, like 'ah.' There was a story about him which I cannot vouch for myself, but which might very well be true. It was said that one day when visiting one of the association wards in the infirmary, he remarked to a man who was very ill: 'Well, my man, I think you are bettah this morning.' The patient, on the contrary, said that he did not feel so well. To this the doctor replied: 'My good man, when I say you are bettah, you *are* bettah.' The result showed that the man was more correct than the doctor, for he died the same day, though that may have been only to spite him. I do not mean to imply that Dr. C—— was at all negligent or indifferent, for he was quite the reverse, and he probably told the man he was 'bettah' on purpose to cheer him up. But there the story is.

Of course, in a place like Parkhurst, where during the summer months there are always from 90 to 100 patients in hospital, and in winter as many as 120 to 130, or even more, the doctors have a great deal to do. Moreover, they

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are very much imposed upon by prisoners, who play all sorts of tricks in order to 'fetch the farm'—that is, to get admitted to the infirmary, and so escape work. It is by no means an uncommon practice for men to make a wound on one of their limbs, and scratch it to keep it open until a really bad sore comes, or else to tie a string tightly round a limb so as to produce inflammation. Serious cases of self-mutilation sometimes occur. One man I remember, a very good worker, and well behaved when I knew him, had only one arm. The other arm he had lost at Portland by deliberately placing it to be crushed between two trucks in a stone quarry, in order that he might be sent to Parkhurst.

Prison doctors not only have very hard work, but they are always on the strain from the peculiar character of many of their patients, and it is infinitely to their credit that most of them, but not quite all I fear, show unvarying patience and good temper, and give the men the utmost benefit of their skill and knowledge. One doctor I came across I think would have got on better if he had paid as much attention to the men as he did to his clothes. He was a very smart-looking young man, and very well turned out, but I cannot say I



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thought he gave the men the proper attention; and I was told on all sides that the way he attended to the men who went down to see him for a dose of something or other, according to their ailment, left much to be desired. He was anything but popular, but it was his own fault; for his heart was not in his work. It was quite the reverse with Drs. Q—— and G——, who thoroughly and most conscientiously fulfilled their duties.

Before leaving this subject, I wish to place on record, for what it may be worth, an opinion of mine which I have formed from careful observation, and which I hold very strongly. It is that the Governor of Parkhurst ought to be a doctor. This may be thought revolutionary, but in reality it is not. In former days the Governor of Woking Prison was a medical man, and at the present time Aylesbury, the women's convict prison, is invariably governed by a medical man. This is also the case at Holloway now, where Dr. Q—— has recently been appointed, and makes no doubt an excellent Governor. It Aylesbury and Holloway, why not Parkhurst, which is really much more of a hospital and a madhouse than anything else? By a medical Governor of course I do not mean a mere ordinary practitioner, pitchforked into a

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position of authority. I mean a man of scientific education with the qualities of a ruler, who has already had long experience of prison work. I believe there are men of very high attainments and all the requisite qualities who would fill the post in a most excellent manner.

I must here mention that soon after I went to Parkhurst a medical director was appointed—Dr. D——. On more than one occasion when I had got run down more than usual I was taken before him to be examined, and I was very favourably impressed by him as being essentially the right man in the right place. I consider his joining the Board of Directors a most practical, and in every way excellent appointment.

Coming now to the clergy, I have not much to say about the Church of England chaplains, because, being a Catholic, I did not come within their regular sphere of action. But what little I had to do with them was pleasant enough. The chaplain at Wormwood Scrubs, Mr. B——, though it was no part of his duty, used often to come and speak to me when I was in the association ward, when he was visiting members of his own flock, and always showed a disposition to be friendly and helpful. The chaplain at Parkhurst,

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Mr. A——, I saw somewhat more of. He used occasionally to visit me in my cell, which was entirely an act of voluntary kindness on his part. He took a great interest in the library, and it was he who supported myself and others in getting leave to have books sent in to us by our friends, on the condition that they should afterwards belong to the library ; and though that sensible arrangement was afterwards put a stop to, it had so enlarged and improved the library that the men will yet benefit by it for a long time to come. Mr. A—— was a gentlemanly, cultivated man. The general impression was that he regarded the prisoners too much as if they were all educated persons, whereas many of them were quite the reverse ; and I have often been told that his sermons were above the heads of most of his congregation. He died just before I left, after which one of the clergymen from Newport acted there as chaplain until another chaplain was appointed. A chaplain who is really devoted to his work can do a great deal of good, and help very much to relieve the sadness of the prison life.

I consider myself extremely fortunate in the Catholic priests I came across while serving my sentence. Father S——, who was at Wormwood

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Scrubs when I arrived, had been many years in the prison service. He was undoubtedly the right man for the place, and was universally liked. He used to look well after his men, and his sermons were always adapted to their capacity, instead of being preached over their heads. When I went to Parkhurst, Father M—— was there, as genial and cheery a man as ever I met. If a prisoner misbehaved himself, however, Father M—— would tell him in a very straightforward manner what he thought of him, and his evident sincerity had a great effect. He left about fifteen months after my arrival, and was succeeded by Canon C——, one of the best preachers I ever heard in my life, and one of the best men. I may mention that there is no regular Catholic chaplain at Parkhurst, but the prison duty is undertaken by the priest at Newport and his curate, who discharge it in the most conscientious and admirable manner. They make a practice of visiting men who are very ill or dying every day, although the prison is quite a mile and a half from where they live. The remuneration these gentlemen receive is absurdly inadequate, being only £100 a year, nominally, and not nearly so much in reality, as on Sunday, in order to fit in the Catholic services with

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the Church of England services, as both have to use the same chapel, it is absolutely necessary for them to have a cab, so as to get back to Newport for the services there, the cost of which must run away with a good part of their stipend. It is only within the last six years or so that there has been any regular Catholic service at Parkhurst, as up to that time there were scarcely any prisoners of that faith there—about ten or eleven. The Government then came to an arrangement with Father M——, who was the priest at Newport, to say Mass in the prison on Sunday, and to visit sick prisoners when required. The remuneration was to be at the rate of £4 per head up to twenty-five, thus making the maximum £100 a year. When I arrived at Parkhurst in March, 1898, the Catholics there numbered about sixty, and when I left there were something over a hundred.

As prison work necessitated the priest keeping and paying a curate, besides spending about £20 a year on cab hire, it will be seen that the balance left was next to nothing. Of course the Church of England chaplain has much more work to do than the Catholic priest, because all the letters and books are under his supervision, but, on the other hand, he has several efficient aids in the school-

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masters, who are as good as curates to him. I do not say for one moment that he is overpaid, but his remuneration is certainly out of all proportion to that of the priest, who has a mile and a half to come to his duties, while the chaplain has a house provided for him at the prison itself. It must be said that a few months before I left a Catholic schoolmaster was appointed, which was some help to the priest. This schoolmaster also played the organ at our services in chapel. Before that we were dependent on the chance of there being an organist among the prisoners. Although occasionally we had a man who played very well, we were sometimes without music for weeks together. I cannot understand why the Government should expect the priest to do the work of the prison for practically nothing, and I certainly think his allowance ought to be doubled. If there were only twenty-five or thirty-five Catholics in the prison it would be different, as then it would only be necessary for the priest to come up for the Sunday services, with an occasional visit during the week. But when there are over a hundred Catholic prisoners, the priest or his curate has to come not only once daily, but sometimes twice, when the number of sick is largely increased, as in the winter.

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The curates in my time were Father H——, Father M——, and Father F——. The last-named went to South Africa when the war broke out as Catholic chaplain to the troops, and, I believe, did very well out there. The other two also were first-rate men, never sparing themselves in visiting the prisoners, and doing all they could to soothe and console the sick and dying and to cheer up the men. I look on both with the greatest admiration, and shall always remember their unfailing kindness to me.

Every now and then extraordinary scenes used to occur in chapel, and we sometimes had a fight to vary the ceremony. One Sunday, soon after the death of Queen Victoria, the priest was speaking about her, and referred to her as having been the ruler of one of the greatest Empires the world has ever known—an Empire in which there was more freedom and justice than in any other country. All at once a man jumped up and began raving and storming, declaring there was no law or justice in England. For the minute it looked as if he would knock the priest down, but he was speedily removed by the officers. This man was a Russian Pole by birth, and if the accounts one reads of prisons in Russia are true, he

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would have found himself much worse off there than at Parkhurst. Not that I think our prison system by any means perfect, and perhaps English ideas of foreign prisons are quite mistaken. Mr. Harry De Windt, in one of his recent books, speaks very highly of some of those he saw in Russia.

I have referred already to the schoolmasters, and I may here touch briefly on what passed for education at Parkhurst. This consisted of illiterate prisoners going to school in one of the halls for half an hour twice a week, out of working hours, to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. Needless to say, all they really did learn in that short time amounted to nothing. A proper schoolroom was being built when I left, and things may be improved; but obviously what is wanted is that attendance at school shall be made a regular part of the daily work. It is of much more importance that the prisoners should get a decent education than that they should be kept at some employment with their hands, which in many cases will be of no use to them when they come out. The school might, in fact, be made a most useful instrument, not only of discipline, but of reformation. As regards the schoolmasters



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themselves, they differed a very great deal in their methods of dealing with the prisoners. Two of them that I came across I decidedly liked, and I am sure they all performed their duties to the best of their abilities. One of them, however, had a positive mania for removing from all books and magazines any drawing or picture containing any human being who was not depicted as fully clothed, male or female. One day I remonstrated with him for cutting the books about so, and his reply was that it would be highly indecent for people to be seen walking about naked, and he therefore considered it was bad for the men's morals to see pictures of people in the nude. I looked at him and quoted the famous motto of the Order of the Garter, and shutting the door of my cell, I pondered awhile as to whether anyone within the walls of Parkhurst—prisoners, officers, or schoolmasters even—would have their morals undermined by looking at any of the pictures that appear in those excellent magazines—*Pearson's*, the *Strand*, the *Windsor*, etc.—which Mr. C—took such a delight in getting his knife—or, rather, his scissors—into.

## IX

### FOOD IN CONVICT PRISONS

LEST it should be thought that in this chapter and in other parts of my narrative I make too much of the food question, I should like to give the opinion of far higher authorities than I can pretend to be. In their report of 1899 the Departmental Committee on Prison Dietaries, consisting of the Right Hon. J. L. Wharton, M.P., Dr. Herbert Smalley, Medical Inspector of Prisons, and Dr. Downes, Medical Inspector for Poor Law Purposes, made the following emphatic statement:

‘The dietary has an intimate relationship with all the other elements of prison life. On its proper adjustment to the requirements of the average prisoner, and the manner of its application and administration, must depend in large measure the successful working of the whole prison system.’

No words could be much stronger than those, but in another passage of their report the Com-

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mittee go even farther. Referring specially to youthful prisoners, the Committee say:

‘The tendency of present-day prison administration is to treat the criminal in a reformatory rather than in a punitive sense. We are convinced that a large amount of criminality is due to physical and mental degeneracy, and a regimen designed to insure the physical and mental well-being of the delinquent will prove better for the individual, and in the long-run better for the race. Nothing is more adapted to attain this desired end than a liberal dietary combined with physical exercise.’

In the warrant appointing the Committee—a very carefully-drawn-up document—the Home Secretary, Sir Matthew White Ridley, laid down these very important rules: Firstly, ‘that the object of prison diets is to secure that the food given to prisoners shall be *sufficient and not more than sufficient to maintain health and strength*’; secondly, ‘that the main principle to be kept in view is that *the ordinary prison diet is not to be regarded as an instrument of punishment*’; thirdly, ‘that prison diets may not bear too favourable a comparison with the diets of free labourers in the outside world or of the inmates of workhouses.’

## Food in Convict Prisons

It should be noted that the 'main principle' so pointedly insisted on by Sir Matthew White Ridley in his instructions to the Committee in May, 1898, was, in fact, quite a new principle. Until then the ordinary prison diet had most distinctly been regarded as an instrument of punishment. The Committee of 1878, on whose recommendations all prison dietaries were based up to the partial adoption of the report of 1899, bluntly declared that, in the case of short-sentence prisoners, at all events, 'to give a diet necessary to the maintenance of health during the longer terms would be to forego an opportunity of inflicting salutary punishment.' In other words, they deliberately urged that starvation should be added to imprisonment and labour as a punishment in English gaols.

All through their report, moreover, they keep that theory in view, though they grudgingly admit the necessity for giving certain classes of prisoners more food and better food than is absolutely required to keep them from dying of hunger or its attendant maladies. Now, it was the scale of diet based on the report of 1878, which is practically the same as the old scale of 1864, that was in force when I was at Wormwood Scrubs, and

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afterwards at Parkhurst, until within a few weeks of my discharge ; and it is to that scale, and not to any subsequent improvement on it, that my remarks must be understood to apply. I say, then, that though the food was, as a rule, eatable, it was to many insufficient, nearly always tasteless and repellent, and often bad, and, on the whole, never such as to be otherwise than 'an instrument of punishment,' and never such as 'to insure the physical and mental well-being of the prisoners.' Every one of these assertions is fully borne out by the report of 1899, in consequence of which the recent reforms, such as they are, were introduced. Though the details may be tiresome to my readers, I think it advisable to give the actual dietaries in order to avoid any suspicion of misstatement or exaggeration. (*See pages 108, 109.*)

Anyone who takes the trouble to consider what these daily allowances of food under the old scale really amounted to, and to compare them with what even a moderate eater ordinarily allows himself, will see that they were not enough to satisfy the average man, working seven or eight hours a day. The Committee reported in the plainest terms that they were 'insufficient,' not varied enough, and 'deficient in the element of

## Food in Convict Prisons

fat.' What that means when even a strong man is limited to such a diet for years together any medical man will know. Though the effect may not show itself at once in a breakdown of health—for it is marvellous how little a man really can subsist upon for a time—it is bound to make itself felt in after-life. Hundreds of men become mere wrecks through the privations they suffer in undergoing long sentences in prison. For that reason the Committee, in recommending a more humane diet, recorded their opinion that 'every prisoner should receive the amount of food sufficient to maintain his general health and bodily condition, so that on discharge he may be capable of taking up any honest means of livelihood.'

I have said that the food was not only insufficient, but often bad, and the Committee also dwelt strongly on that point. I will give a few instances. One Sunday—which was known as pork-soup day, because the dinner consisted then only of one pint of pork-soup and eight ounces of bread for full labour men—the pork that the soup was made of was absolutely putrid. Consequently, all that we full labour men could eat for dinner that day was eight ounces of bread. The light labour men came better off, though they are supposed to

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require less food, their Sunday dinner consisting of four ounces of cheese and eight ounces of bread.

There was a tremendous noise in our hall during the whole dinner-time, which on Sunday is from twelve to two, the men banging their doors and making all the disturbance they could. The next day there were so many complaints to the Governor that he investigated the matter very closely. It came out that when the meat was issued to the master-cook on the Saturday, he pointed out that it was tainted, and that, as the weather was very hot, it would be quite bad by the following day. The steward, however, told him that the meat must be used. On Sunday, of course, it was quite unfit for human consumption. If a butcher had exposed it for sale he would have been heavily fined. Yet, as the master-cook had nothing else to make the soup of, he had to use the decayed pork. He tried to smother it by putting in an extra quantity of vinegar, but the mess was so disgusting that no one could swallow it, and so we had to make our dinner that day on bread alone. Colonel P——, who was then Governor, was very much put out by this occurrence, and well he might be, for if we had eaten the soup a good many of us would have been

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poisoned. He therefore ordered four ounces of cheese to be given to each man for supper on Monday as compensation for the loss of their dinner the day before.

On another occasion, when I was working in No. 12 party on the farm, the mutton served for dinner was perfectly rotten. I happened to be one of the orderlies that day, and part of my duty was to help to collect the dinner-tins. This occurred when I was in 'A' hall, and at the time there were thirty-nine men on my ward. Thirty-six returned their dinner untouched; another told the officer he had thrown his dinner through the ventilator because the smell of it in his cell made him horribly ill; and only two men out of the thirty-nine had managed to eat the meat. I never cared to make complaints about the food myself, because I thought it better to put up with almost anything rather than cause trouble; but this time it seemed so scandalous to give such meat to the prisoners that I felt it a duty to go before the Governor the next day to complain. The Governor said the steward had told him the meat was fresh, but the animal it came from was one of the toughest to cut up that he had ever seen. I replied that I could not



# OLD DIETARY.

Meals.	Men employed at Hard Labour.	Men employed at Light Labour.
<b>BREAKFAST.</b>		
<i>Daily.</i>		
Bread . . . . .	8 oz.	6 oz.
Gruel, sweetened with $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Molasses* . . . . .	1 pt.	1 pt.
<b>DINNER.</b>		
<i>Sunday.</i>		
Bread . . . . .	8 oz.	12 oz.
Pea Soup (Pork) . . . . .	1 pt.	—
Cheese . . . . .	—	4 oz.
<i>Monday.</i>		
Bread . . . . .	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes . . . . .	16 oz.	16 oz.
Cooked Beef . . . . .	5 oz.	4 oz.
<i>Tuesday.</i>		
Bread . . . . .	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes . . . . .	16 oz.	12 oz.
Soup . . . . .	1 pt.	1 pt.
Cheese . . . . .	2 oz.	—
<i>Wednesday.</i>		
Bread . . . . .	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes . . . . .	16 oz.	16 oz.
Cooked Mutton . . . . .	5 oz.	4 oz.
<i>Thursday.</i>		
Bread . . . . .	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes . . . . .	16 oz.	16 oz.
Suet Pudding . . . . .	16 oz.	8 oz.
<i>Friday.</i>		
Bread . . . . .	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes . . . . .	16 oz.	12 oz.
Soup . . . . .	1 pt.	1 pt.
Cheese . . . . .	2 oz.	—
<i>Saturday.</i>		
Bread . . . . .	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes . . . . .	16 oz.	16 oz.
Cooked Beef . . . . .	5 oz.	4 oz.
<b>SUPPER.</b>		
<i>Daily.</i>		
Bread . . . . .	8 oz.	6 oz.
Cocoa . . . . .	1 pt.	1 pt.
Bread per Convict per week . . . . .	168 oz.	145 oz.

\* A pint of tea is given for breakfast in lieu of gruel to those men who have served a certain part of their sentence, if they prefer it.

# EXISTING DIETARY.

Meals.	E. Men employed at Hard Labour.	D. Men employed at Sedentary Indoor Labour and Light Labour.
<b>BREAKFAST.</b>		
<i>Daily.</i>		
Bread - - - - -	8 oz.	8 oz.
Butter or Margarine* - - -	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz.	—
Porridge - - - - -	1 pt.	—
Gruel, sweetened with $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. sugar - - - - -	—	1 pt.
<b>DINNER.</b>		
<i>Sunday.</i>		
Bread - - - - -	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes - - - - -	16 oz.	12 oz.
Cooked Meat, preserved by heat - - - - -	6 oz.	5 oz.
<i>Monday.</i>		
Bread - - - - -	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes - - - - -	16 oz.	12 oz.
Beans - - - - -	12 oz.	12 oz.
Fat Bacon - - - - -	2 oz.	2 oz.
<i>Tuesday.</i>		
Bread - - - - -	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes - - - - -	16 oz.	12 oz.
Cooked Mutton without bone	6 oz.	5 oz.
<i>Wednesday.</i>		
Bread - - - - -	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes - - - - -	16 oz.	12 oz.
Pea Soup (Pork) - - -	1 pt.	1 pt.
<i>Thursday.</i>		
Bread - - - - -	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes - - - - -	16 oz.	12 oz.
Cooked Beef without bone -	6 oz.	5 oz.
<i>Friday.</i>		
Bread - - - - -	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes - - - - -	16 oz.	12 oz.
Vegetable Soup (Beef) - -	1 pt.	1 pt.
<i>Saturday.</i>		
Bread - - - - -	8 oz.	8 oz.
Potatoes - - - - -	16 oz.	12 oz.
Suet Pudding - - - - -	16 oz.	12 oz.
<b>SUPPER.</b>		
<i>Daily.</i>		
Bread - - - - -	12 oz.	8 oz.
Cocoa - - - - -	1 pt.	1 pt.
<i>Wednesdays and Fridays.</i>		
Cheese - - - - -	2 oz.	—
Bread per Convict per week -	196 oz.	168 oz.

\* Butter or margarine to be given for six months in the year—October to March (inclusive). During the remaining months, April to September (inclusive), milk,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint for each convict at hard labour, to be substituted for butter or margarine, and to be given in the form of milk porridge. The Committee also recommended 3 ounces of raw onion to be given to the men on E. diet for supper on Wednesdays and Fridays, but the prison authorities would not sanction this.

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agree that the meat was fresh, for though I had not eaten it, the smell was nearly enough to make one sick. The principal warder, Mr. H——, who was then acting as chief warder, informed the Governor that several of the officers had told him there was a most offensive stench from the meat the previous day. The Governor said he would inquire closely into the matter.

Two days later he sent for me and told me there was no doubt the sheep in question was nothing but a very old ram, and he had had the contractor up and severely reprimanded him for supplying such uneatable meat. He said that I had been quite right in bringing the matter under his notice. The steward, however, was just as much to blame as the contractor for passing meat which he must have known was uneatable.

The food all that summer was very bad. For five weeks together they gave us rotten potatoes. I see the Committee in their report made some severe remarks on the disgraceful mismanagement of the supply of potatoes. A glance at the dietary will show that potatoes form a great part of the prisoners' subsistence, and if these are bad the men either starve or else make themselves ill. The

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Committee discovered that the contractors were allowed to send in great quantities of potatoes when they could be bought cheaply, and to lessen the supply or stop it altogether when they were dear. To suit the contractors' pocket, therefore, the unfortunate prisoners had to eat rotten potatoes, or else go without half their dinner, for weeks at a stretch. Here, again, the steward was entirely to blame, for it was his duty to see that fresh potatoes were supplied in regular quantities all the year round, regardless of the state of the market. The Government paid the full price for such a regular supply, and it was a cruel shame that the helpless prisoners should be made to suffer in order to give the contractors an extra profit.

The bread at times was very good, but often it was quite the reverse. It seemed either to be made of bad flour or to be half baked, and there is nothing more unwholesome than sour, sodden bread. Seeing that the prisoners almost live on bread, it is inexcusable to allow it to be of bad quality. The Committee dwelt strongly on this, and explained the fact of the bread being sometimes good and sometimes bad by the negligent and ill-managed supply of wheat and flour, and

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also by the ignorance of the millers and cooks. What with bad meat, bad potatoes, and bad bread, the prisoners too often had to do their work on empty stomachs, while many of them fell sick from it.

This was not only a flagrant wrong, but it was the worst kind of economy, from the public point of view. I do not wish to bring an accusation against anybody, but I am bound to say I think there must be a great deal of corruption in the supply of food to prisons ; and, considering that the prisoners are totally unable to protect themselves, the authorities ought surely to protect them against such a mean and pitiless form of dishonesty. It is almost as bad as stealing a blind man's dog.

The new diet for hard-labour men, which came in a few weeks before I left Parkhurst, was in some ways a great improvement on the old. The quantity and variety of the food were increased. Yet this reform was so muddled by the officials that it actually constituted a gross injustice to some classes of prisoners, and was the cause of serious discontent. For some incomprehensible reason the new scale of full diet was only given to hard-labour parties working on the farm, with

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the exception of the carpenters, builders, blacksmiths, and laundry hands.

The printers, tailors, and shoemakers—three parties that earn probably more than any others in the prison—were excluded from it, and were put on the new light labour diet. I am sure I am right in saying that the Governor and all the officers thought this most unfair. I believe the Governor made very strong representations to the prison authorities at the Home Office as to the unjust working of the new rules, but without any effect. It very nearly caused a mutiny among the shoemakers. Some of the best men in the tailor shops also immediately applied to the Governor to be transferred to an outdoor party, and this request he at once granted, as the men were well conducted and good workers. If they had not been transferred, they would probably have refused to labour, and so got themselves into trouble.

One would have thought the Home Office authorities would have had sense enough to know that these parties, which worked as long as any others, and whose work was infinitely more valuable, should have benefited by the new diet, instead of which they were none the better for it. There is no more forcible part of the report than

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that in which the Committee urged the necessity for supplying the prisoners with green vegetables. They show how easily this could be done, and they refer to it again and again, as one of the most needful reforms in prison diet, as indeed it is. Yet the authorities took no notice at all of this important and insistent recommendation of men specially selected by the Government to deal with this very question, two of them being eminent doctors. Even the allowance of three ounces of raw onions to be added with cheese twice a week for supper was struck out of the dietary recommended by the Committee.

In a previous chapter I mentioned the enormous number of prisoners who were admitted to the infirmary suffering from indigestion in various forms—spots, boils, rashes, and other skin disease, in many cases undoubtedly the result of a diet from which green vegetables are rigidly excluded. This evil is so conspicuous, and it has been brought so often to the notice of the authorities, that it is impossible to say why they refused to remedy it after their own Committee had most strongly recommended them to do so, and shown them how to do it. If vegetables had to be bought, there might be obstacles in the way of a

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regular supply; but, as the Committee point out, the growing of vegetables is about the best occupation prisoners could have, and certainly at Parkhurst there is plenty of land available. As a matter of fact, large quantities of excellent vegetables are grown at Parkhurst, but the prisoners are forbidden to eat the smallest morsel, though their craving for green food is such that I have constantly seen men eat all sorts of green weeds, and if they can secretly get hold of a carrot or onion, they ram it into their mouth, tops, dirt and all. Now, this is an offence, and, if detected, they run the risk of being punished by loss of marks—equivalent to prolonged imprisonment—or by bread-and-water diet. Yet the temptation is really irresistible, for it is most tantalizing for the men to be in the midst of green food, the product of their own labour, and to know that, after the pick of it is sold to the officers or given to the cows, the surplus will be given to the pigs. In the new diet twelve ounces of dried beans are allowed on Monday, and vegetable beef-soup on Friday, but this is surely no fulfilment of the Committee's specific recommendation—'that where land is available for cultivation, fresh vegetables should be *freely used* in the dietary.'



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I should like to say, from my own observation in prison, that this report of 1899 is a most enlightened and just one. It goes to the root of the subject, and is based on clearly-defined principles. Without suggesting ever so remotely the pampering or coddling of convicts, it yet stands out for what are undoubtedly their rights as human beings under the charge of the State, which the report of 1878 decidedly did not, and I think that all prisoners are deeply indebted to the Committee for drawing up such a report, as well as for the vigilance and shrewdness with which they discerned and exposed the causes of many of their ills. If the whole of the 'principal recommendations,' from I. to XXV., were adopted by the authorities intelligently, and in a liberal spirit, the condition of prisoners would be vastly improved, and the object of the criminal law would be much better gained than it is. I saw one member of the Committee—Dr. Herbert Smalley, Medical Inspector of Prisons—several times. When he came on his visits of inspection he took an interest in every case, and showed me the utmost kindness. I am sure that little or nothing escaped him that lay within the province of his powerful and responsible office.

One thing I cannot understand: Parkhurst is

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the convict invalid station, yet it has the reputation of giving the worst food of any convict prison. The Committee, by-the-by, commented very severely on the quality of the food supplied at Wormwood Scrubs, which is only supposed to be a local prison, but certainly the food I received there was infinitely better than at Parkhurst. I had no experience of Portland, the only other convict prison where first offenders are sent. But I have spoken to many men of all classes who have been there, and they all say the food at Parkhurst was beyond comparison worse than at Portland, where there are next to none but able-bodied men. This is a wrong state of things, for at an invalid station the good quality of the food should obviously be the first consideration. There is no sense in feeding sick prisoners on garbage which costs the Government twice as much as wholesome provisions. Captain E—— W—— most certainly did something to mend matters, but a medical Governor could have done much more. If such a man as Dr. Herbert Smalley had been appointed on Colonel P——'s resignation, Parkhurst might have been a very different institution in many respects from what it is to-day—at least, that is my opinion.

## X

### DAILY ROUTINE

IN order to give a correct idea of prison life, I should mention that no one actually lives within the walls, except the convicts and a few unmarried officers. At Parkhurst the Governor, the Deputy-Governor, the chaplain, the medical officer, and one of the doctors have comfortable private houses within the grounds which are attached to the prison, but outside of its walls. The other doctor lives where he pleases. The chief warder, some of the principal warders, and most of the subordinate officers are provided with quarters in the grounds, while those for whom there are no quarters available live in houses or lodgings in the neighbourhood, and receive an allowance in lieu of quarters. All are free to occupy themselves in any way they like when not on duty. This daily relief from the prison surroundings is necessary to keep them in health and spirits, and it also has a great deal to do with

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their habitual self-control and good temper, and their contentment with what would otherwise be a very hard service. We will now follow the routine throughout the week.

On Sunday morning the gatekeeper who has been on duty during the night rings the bell at ten minutes to seven, when the officers who are to be on duty for the day have to enter the prison. The first duty is to unlock the prisoners who are doing orderly work in the different wards, so that they may go round and collect the slops. Two men carry a large pail between them, and walk behind an officer, who unlocks the cell-doors. The prisoners stand just inside their cell-doors, and empty their slops into the pail as the officer passes, the door being immediately closed again. By the time this work is finished the breakfasts have come in from the cook-shop, and are carried round by the orderlies, and served out by the officers on their respective wards. The cells are then doubly locked, and the officers go off to their own breakfast, leaving one in each hall as a patrol. After the men have had their breakfast they must tidy their cells, put up their beds, clean their tin-ware, and make everything neat and trim. At a quarter to nine the Catholics are unlocked and

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attend Mass, which takes place at nine o'clock. The Church of England men are unlocked at nine, and at a quarter-past they go out for about an hour's exercise. At a quarter-past ten they form up on the different exercise grounds and march into chapel, the service commencing at half-past ten. The Catholics being out of chapel soon after ten, they form up outside and wait until the Church of England men have gone in, when they have their turn of exercise for about an hour. At half-past eleven they go back to their cells, and the Church of England men having come out of chapel about this time, they also return to their cells.

Dinners are then served out, and the men being doubly locked in, the officers go off to dinner, again leaving one in each hall on patrol. At ten minutes to two the officers return and unlock the cells, and the dinner tins are collected by the orderlies. Men who have reached a certain class then go out for a short exercise, returning to their cells shortly before half-past two, when they go to chapel, which lasts until half-past three, and is immediately followed by the afternoon service for the Catholics. The same building being used for both, the services have to take place at different times, which is rather awkward.

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The Jews attend their synagogue, Parkhurst being the only convict prison to which Jews are now sent.

Some time during Sunday afternoon prisoners who have reached the fourth, or 'blue-collar' stage, which means having served three full years with good conduct, are allowed to walk together in couples and talk for half an hour. It is at the discretion of the authorities to prevent any two men walking and talking together, if they consider it advisable to do so, and they also have the right to prohibit any special man from walking and talking with others at all, if they think he might have a pernicious influence. This restriction is especially directed against those convicts known as 'fences'—that is, receivers of stolen goods, and it is quite right it should be so, for they are among the most mischievous members of the criminal class. They are not only criminals themselves, but they are the deliberate and calculating makers of criminals for their own profit. They teach men and boys, women and girls, to commit thefts, and they enable them to dispose of the proceeds, themselves, of course, taking the larger share. If it were possible to wipe out the 'fences' altogether, a great deal of crime would die out naturally,

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because the temptation in the first instance, and the prospect of enjoying the results, would both be taken away. It will readily be understood that men of that stamp, if allowed to walk and talk with prisoners, are pretty sure to take advantage of the privilege for pushing their nefarious business. About half-past four on Sunday all prisoners are back in their cells, and suppers are served out. At about twenty minutes to seven the cell doors are unlocked, and an officer looks in to see that all is right. They are then locked up for the night, a principal warder following the officers and trying the handle of each cell door to make sure that it is properly 'on the double.' The men have then to go at once to bed, and in winter the lights are put out. In summer a great many men read in bed as long as it is light.

Such is Sunday in prison, and it is certainly for the majority of the men the most wearisome day in the week. The two services make a little break, whether the men care anything about religion or not; and the talking, for the small percentage to whom it is allowed, makes up to them for the long hours they are shut up in their cells. Newspaper writers and others who represent Sunday in prison as an agreeable holiday either know nothing of

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the facts, or else distort them for purposes of effect.

On Monday morning the first bell rings at ten minutes past five, when the men have to get up. At half-past five the officers enter the prison, slops are collected, breakfasts are served out, and the men are again locked up in their cells. At about ten minutes to seven the officers return from their breakfast, and at seven the Church of England men are marched off to the chapel. Before going out every man must make his cell clean and tidy, with everything in the place assigned to it. After the service, which only lasts about a quarter of an hour, all the men go off to their parade-grounds. Each man has a special place told off where he has to stand in the ranks, and each party have a special place for parading. There is a principal warder on each parade-ground, and the officers of each party give him the roll of their own men. After being 'rubbed down,' the parties march off to the places where they respectively work—the cooks to the cook-house, the blacksmiths, tailors, bookbinders, to the workshops, the farm labourers out on the farm, and so on. At ten minutes past eleven the big bell rings, and all the parties are marched back to their respective parade-grounds,



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where they are searched before going to their cells. Those men, however, who have their names down to see the Governor or doctor now do so. Dinners are then served out, and the men are left to themselves while the officers go to their dinner, one officer being left in each hall as patrol. At ten minutes to one the officers return, dinner tins are collected, and at one o'clock the men again go on parade for roll-call and search, and then march off to their work, as before. At five o'clock the bell rings, and all the parties cease labour for the day and march into the prison. The same routine is gone through as before dinner, and the men go back to their cells, and suppers are served out. At twenty minutes to seven the cells are visited to see that the men are all right, and they are then locked up for the night. The men are not allowed to go to bed till eight o'clock, or even to take their beds down until a bell rings in the hall at ten minutes to eight. In winter the lights are kept on until eight. Exactly the same round is repeated on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. On Saturday there is no work in the afternoon, so when the men go to their cells for dinner, soon after eleven o'clock, they do not leave them again until about nine on Sunday morning

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—a twenty-two hours' spell of solitude. Once a fortnight every cell is 'turned over'—that is, thoroughly examined—and the inmate himself is stripped and searched. In addition, if any man is suspected of having anything concealed, he may be searched several times a week.

On November 1 work is knocked off at half-past four instead of five, and during December and January at a quarter-past four. During these two months the early prison-bell rings at half-past five in the morning instead of ten minutes past. This is the only difference in the hours between summer and winter. Once a week each man has to scrub out his cell during the breakfast hour. Once a week, also, each man is shaved, or, rather, the hair on the face is clipped to within a sixteenth of an inch, and every second week the hair of the head is clipped down to an eighth of an inch. Every man has a hot bath once a week. On Saturday afternoon, though there is no outside work, the men have to clean their boots and shoes, and a certain number are employed outside their cells cleaning the landings, polishing the brass and steel work, and tidying up generally for Sunday. Each man is allowed to keep six educational books in his cell, which he can change, if he chooses,

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once a month, in addition to religious books. Educational books are any sort of school-books or encyclopædias, dictionaries, etc.

Each man is allowed to choose two books of any sort per week from the library, and to keep a slate and pencil in his cell. To many prisoners this provision for reading and writing is invaluable, and life would be scarcely bearable without it. Others who cannot read yet enjoy picture-books, and there are raised-letter books for the blind. But there are others who never look at a book and never use their slate from one year's end to another, either from ignorance or from want of inclination, and it is hard to imagine how such as these pass the long hours in their cells. I found, however, that reading during the winter months tried my eyes very much, owing to the light being placed behind a piece of fluted glass, and to the constant flickering of the gas-jet caused by the draught in the hall.

During their first year prisoners are allowed to receive two visits, each of twenty minutes' duration, from their friends, and to write and receive two letters. During the second year they are allowed to receive three visits, each of twenty minutes' duration, and to write and receive three

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letters. During the third year they may receive four visits, and write and receive four letters. After that they are allowed a visit of thirty minutes every two months, and may also write and receive a letter every two months. Men whose friends do not come to see them may write and receive a letter in lieu of each visit allowed by the regulations. On receiving what is called the 'blue dress,' which only a man of good conduct can obtain for the last year of his imprisonment, prisoners can have a visit, and receive and write a letter even more frequently. To get the blue dress, however, with these and other privileges, a prisoner must have served four full years, so that a five-years' man cannot get it at all, and a six-years' man can only wear it for the last six months of his sentence. I believe it would tend to encourage good conduct and to prevent relapse into crime if every first offender were allowed the blue dress for the last year of his sentence, whether long or short, provided, of course, that his conduct was good.

On the other hand, strangely enough, and surely against all reason and fairness, length of time in prison is not taken into account with regard to payment for labour. The utmost money that a

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man can earn by his work in prison is £3, no matter whether he works for six years or sixteen. That is to say, a man undergoing a sentence of six years can earn the sum of £3, but after that he cannot earn any more, even though he stays in prison for ten or fourteen years longer. If he has joined one of the Prisoners' Aid Societies, another £3 is added by the Society. Thus, all that a man has to start with, when he comes out, even if he has served a life sentence, which means twenty years, is £6. Each man on being discharged is also given a suit of clothes, hat, boots, and underwear ; but as the whole value of these is only £1 17s. 6d., they cannot be very serviceable. Of course, if a discharged prisoner has a home to go to, and friends or relatives to help him, £6 and a temporary outfit may suffice to tide him over. But if he has served a long sentence he is much more likely to be homeless and friendless when he comes out, and in that case it is hard for him to keep straight on the scanty sum given to him on leaving prison. It would not involve a great outlay, and even that would probably be saved in other ways, if every prisoner were enabled to earn a small sum a year during the whole of his term, however long. It would certainly keep

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many from coming back who do so now from sheer destitution. When I first went to prison, photographs of relations and friends were allowed to be sent to the men, who, however, were only allowed to retain them twenty-four hours. Now they are allowed to retain them altogether, which privilege is much appreciated by many. Tooth-brushes were not allowed either, but this concession was granted after I had been at Parkhurst about a year or more—certainly a move in the right direction.

There is one privilege enjoyed by prisoners which, though quite right in principle, is abused to such an extent that it defeats its own purpose. In addition to having the right to make complaints at all times to the Governor, and to the Directors when they pay their periodical visits, every prisoner is allowed to petition the Secretary of State as often as he chooses. Having sent one petition, he may send another as soon as the answer to the first is received ; and he may put into the petition practically whatever he pleases, not only about his own case, but about the management of the prison generally, and the conduct of any of the officials. The consequence is that a great many restless or ill-conditioned prisoners make a regular practice

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of sending petitions on all sorts of trivial subjects, complaining of things with which the Secretary of State has nothing to do, and bringing accusations against the officials, often without the slightest justification. Every one of these petitions is supposed to be carefully considered, and placed before the Secretary of State. With such an enormous number to deal with it is impossible that any of them should meet with much attention ; and this, no doubt, is the reason why cases of real injustice or hardship, urgently calling for inquiry, are sometimes overlooked. The right of petition, therefore, instead of being an advantage, is actually a disadvantage to those prisoners who really have good cause to resort to it. The vast majority of petitions being groundless, and often full of untruths, the few which are truthful and reasonable are neglected with the rest. This is altogether wrong, and it ought to be remedied without delay. In my opinion, no prisoner should be allowed to petition more than once in six months ; and any prisoner making charges against officials which, on investigation, prove to be false, should invariably be punished by loss of marks for remission of sentence. As it is, a prisoner who accuses an officer falsely to the Governor or the Directors

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may be punished, not only by loss of marks, but by bread-and-water diet and solitary confinement. Yet he may tell as many lies as he likes to the Secretary of State, as a rule without incurring any penalty. If he were held responsible for every statement he makes, a petition would become a serious thing, as it ought to be. The number of petitions would then be enormously reduced, and any for which good grounds exist would have a fair chance of being attended to by the higher officials, and brought to the notice of the Secretary of State.



## XI

### PUNISHMENTS, INCORRIGIBLES, AND SUICIDES

THROUGHOUT this narrative I have carefully abstained from anything like sensational writing, and I have no intention of trying to make my readers' flesh creep by highly-coloured descriptions of the horrors which are inseparable from the restraint of criminals, even under the best penal systems. But there are some more or less unpleasant features of prison life which I am bound to touch on, in order to make this a complete and truthful picture. Of punishment for prison offences, I have no personal experience, because I had the good fortune never to forfeit a single mark or incur any other penalty. This, however, is nothing to boast of, for there are very many others who do the same, and some men get into trouble through no fault of their own, either by traps laid for them by malicious fellow-prisoners, or else by giving way to fits of nervous irritation which sometimes overcome them in spite of every effort of self-control. I

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myself came within an ace of incurring punishment from both these causes, though I had made the strongest determination from the first, and stuck to it to the end, to be well-conducted, obedient, and, as far as possible, cheerful. While, therefore, I take no particular credit for having avoided punishment—especially as the hope of obtaining the maximum remission was an abiding and overwhelming inducement to good behaviour—I think the fact enables me to discuss the subject impartially. I wish to say first that I do not believe there is any wanton or spiteful tendency on the part of the officers to get men punished, nor, as a rule, are the punishments themselves excessive. Very few cases of what I may call unreasonable punishment came to my knowledge. On the contrary, from what I shall have to say presently it will be gathered that some ill-conducted and idle prisoners are treated with far too much consideration. I should say it is the junior officers, rather than the prisoners, who have to fear injustice or undue severity for trifling or accidental breaches of discipline. In nine cases out of ten a prisoner who gets punished has only himself to thank for it ; of that I am absolutely certain.

The prison punishments countenanced by the

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regulations are these : For lesser offences, loss of marks, which means a shortening of the remission of sentence that can be gained by good conduct, or, to put it the other way, a lengthening of the actual term of imprisonment ; solitary confinement with bread and water ; loss of class, involving forfeiture of privileges previously gained by length of service with good conduct. The first and third of these punishments scarcely affect downright badly-disposed prisoners at all, because that sort do not expect or intend to get any remission, and seldom arrive at the class status. Those whom they affect most are first offenders, not hardened to crime, who count every hour before they shall get their release and return to a decent life, and to whom the class privileges are a great advantage. What the really bad men hate is the bread-and-water diet ; but even that is not a very terrible punishment to some of them. The longest term of bread-and-water diet to which the Visiting Committee have the power to sentence a prisoner is eighteen days, and this must on no account be continuous. It must be divided into intervals not exceeding three days, alternating with equal intervals on light labour diet. During the bread-and-water diet no labour whatsoever is exacted.

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Long experience proves that three days' bread and water without labour is never injurious to health, and in any case the doctor visits the prisoner daily, and if he found him suffering any ill-effects would at once change the diet. All the same, a quarter of a loaf of bread with water per day is not an exhilarating diet, and on the second or third day it must become exceedingly depressing, if not acutely painful. Only in very bad cases is the full space of eighteen days inflicted.

For extremely serious offences, such as attempting to escape, the punishments, in addition to those above mentioned, are the parti-coloured dress and chains. The parti-coloured dress for men who have attempted to escape is yellow and drab, while that for men who have committed a violent assault on an officer is black and drab ; while prisoners who commit violent assaults on officers are also liable to be flogged, either with the birch or with the cat. Such men as these care nothing for disgrace, and are rather proud than otherwise of the distinctive signs of having struck a bold stroke for revenge or liberty ; but they one and all have a most wholesome dread of being flogged. Even birching they have a great objection to, not that it really hurts anything like as much as a good caning

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at school. It is the ridicule that attaches to it in the eyes of the other prisoners that stings, and for that reason experienced prison officials consider it a more effective punishment than it appears. It has the recommendation, further, of leaving no after injury. The cat, on the other hand, which is strictly reserved for the very worst cases of all—and then only for men of the strongest physique—is a punishment which leaves its marks in some cases both on body and on mind. It is the one thing the callous, depraved, dehumanized convict stands in mortal fear of, and the fact of its hanging in the background, to be used in the last resort, is the most powerful, if not the only restraint on his ferocity that the authorities have at their command. A prisoner who commits murder, of course, incurs the death penalty, unless he were insane at the time, in which case he is ordered to be confined at Broadmoor, the criminal lunatic prison, ‘during the King’s pleasure.’

It is impossible for anyone who has not witnessed it to imagine the furious and senseless malevolence of that class of convicts who have got to the hopelessly incorrigible stage. The prison system is often blamed for the existence of such creatures, but though I am well aware that the system

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sometimes makes good men bad, and bad men worse, I think most of these particular men must have been thoroughly vicious by nature, and beyond redemption before they came to prison at all. They seem to be solely governed by evil passions, as if possessed of a devil, and their only idea is to make themselves a curse to everybody round them. I will give one or two instances which fairly illustrate my meaning, without the slightest exaggeration.

There was a man, whom I will call H——, the very type of the incurrigible convict. He had been a soldier, and had murdered his best comrade in his regiment in India by, I believe, braining him with a tent-peg whilst asleep for the sake of a few shillings that he knew he had. He ought undoubtedly to have been hanged, for a more heartless murder never was committed. I suppose he made out he was suffering from sunstroke, a common excuse in India for crimes of violence. At all events, the death sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life, and he was at Parkhurst nearly the whole time I was there. They sent him to Portland for a few months to see whether they could do anything with him there, but his conduct was so atrocious that he was soon returned. Whilst

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at Parkhurst he nearly always wore the parti-coloured dress, and very often the chains also for perpetual assaults on the officers. My first personal acquaintance with him was one day when I was orderly in 'B' hall infirmary, and he was being brought back to the punishment cells from chapel. I was busy washing the staircase at the time, and as he passed me coming down the steps he kicked over the bucket, upsetting the water and necessitating my cleaning the ironwork over again. As he did this he shouted out : ' All you —— aristocrats ought to have your throats cut ! ' I thought I would teach him a lesson for this, so the next morning I filled my bucket with actually boiling water, and set it on the stairs, feeling sure he would kick it again so as to make me do my work twice over. It turned out just as I expected. Prisoners undergoing punishment wear low shoes, their heavy boots not being allowed in the punishment cells, because they would be formidable weapons to attack the officers with. When he kicked the bucket, therefore, and the boiling water went over his feet, he got such a scalding that he howled with pain, for men of his type always cry out loudest when they are hurt. He never interfered with me any more, but I know what he

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would have done if he had got the chance, for he was absolutely uncontrollable in his anger. I saw him one day seize a great iron turnkey, and make for an officer who had merely spoken to him about something he had done. As he was a big, powerful man, and the key was three or four feet long, everyone kept at a safe distance from him until several officers could be brought on the scene. The man then drew a cross on the gravel with the key, and, standing by it, bellowed out : ' Either I shall die here or one of you shall ! ' The only way they could disarm him was by one of the principal warders making thrusts at him with his long sword, as the warders and assistant-warders only carry short sword-bayonets. While the man was trying to get in a blow at the principal warder with his iron key, another officer closed with him from behind, and then there was a real rough and tumble scrimmage. No fewer than five officers were on him at once, but the only way they were able to get the key from him at last was by hitting him with the flat of their swords till his arms were so bruised all over that he was compelled to give in. If this had not been done he would certainly have seriously injured the officers, if he had not killed one of them outright. Even after he was



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overpowered he would not go quietly, but had to be 'frog-marched' to the separate cells. The only reason why he dared to behave in such a way was because, not being constitutionally sound, though enormously strong physically, he knew that no doctor would pass him for being flogged, on account of his heart. As for wearing the punishment parti-coloured dress and chains, or the bread-and-water diet, he was long past caring for such trifles. The only punishment he might have had that would have affected him would have been a birching, but though it could not have done him any great harm, he confidently counted on its not being allowed.

Now, I do not see how the system can be held responsible for such an inhuman nature as that. It was a brute rather than a man that the system had to deal with from the first, and if it could not do anything to reform him, neither could it degrade him lower than he was. Severity and mercy were equally without effect upon him.

The only thing to be done was to keep him within bounds, and, if possible, prevent his exercising his bloodthirsty instincts on others. It is to the credit of our system that, in the face of all

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discouragements, it perseveres in according him the rights of a civilized being, and, at least, the opportunity of reformation if he had a spark of good in him at all.

There was another man, by the name of T——, who was always in trouble for making violent attacks on the officers without the smallest provocation. On one occasion he committed a furious assault on the Governor, Colonel P——. Whilst undergoing punishment he somehow contrived to secrete in his cell a bath-plug—which is a heavy piece of hard wood—and when the Governor made his usual daily visit, the moment his cell door was opened, he threw the plug at him with all his force. Luckily, he aimed rather low, and the plug struck the Governor in the chest. If it had caught him fair on the head, it might have killed him. This same man succeeded one day in wresting an officer's 'kosh,' or baton, out of his hand, and if he had not been knocked down by another officer before he could strike a blow there is little doubt he would have done most serious injury, for when in one of those rages he was just like a wild beast. On another occasion one of the principal warders, Mr. B——, came very near losing his life. He was quietly going

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his rounds in the afternoon, and, on visiting the laundry, one of the men working there suddenly hit him a terrible blow from behind with a spanner, and was about to hit him again, when two other prisoners came to the rescue, and knocked the man down. The officer had a fearful wound on the back of his head, and was incapacitated from duty for a very long time. For this totally unprovoked crime, which was surely an attempt to murder, all the punishment the man got was bread-and-water diet and so many days in the separate cells, the loss of some weeks' remission, the parti-coloured dress, and chains, and twelve strokes with the birch. Can it be denied that he thoroughly deserved a severe flogging with the cat?

Personally speaking, I consider that every prisoner making a violent attack on an officer ought to be birched, if not flogged with the cat, provided his health will stand it, for these reasons: Firstly, as I have said, flogging is the only thing the ill-conditioned prisoner stands in awe of. Secondly, there is no excuse whatsoever for any prisoner taking the law into his own hands and doing violence to an officer. Even supposing the officer to have treated a prisoner harshly or un-

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justly, the man has every possible facility for bringing his grievance before the Governor, and I can safely say that every Governor or Deputy-Governor that I have been under would thoroughly investigate any such complaint.

The instances I have given will suffice here, but I shall have occasion elsewhere to say something more about incurrigible convicts and their treatment. That some prisoners are literally driven to desperation by misery is proved by the suicides, notwithstanding every precaution to prevent them. There were several at Parkhurst whilst I was there, but I cannot say I had much sympathy with any of the victims, excepting one, a 'star' man, named F——, who was in for life. This man had sent a petition for release to the Home Secretary, having sent many previously. This one, for some reason, he hoped might be successful, in spite of former failures, as he had then been in prison no less than seventeen years, and had always been well conducted and given no trouble to the officers. Under ordinary circumstances a 'life' sentence involves twenty years' imprisonment before the case is reconsidered; but it is not very unusual for prisoners to be released before that period. This man, however, was informed in the regular way

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by the Governor that the answer to his petition was 'No grounds'—meaning that the Home Secretary saw no grounds for reconsidering his case. The next day, when the cell doors were unlocked for the prisoners to take in their dinner, the unfortunate man rushed out, climbed up the railing in front, and threw himself over on to the asphalt pavement, about thirty feet below, receiving such injuries that he instantly died. I think everyone was sorry for this man, because he had served such a long time, and was very inoffensive. I suppose the keen disappointment<sup>7</sup> for the moment upset the balance of his brain.

Another man, named T——, whom I knew well, as he had been a hospital orderly, destroyed himself in a very determined way. He had lost his position as orderly through fighting with another man, and this seemed so to prey upon his mind that he was admitted into hospital as a patient completely broken down, and for some time could not be got to take proper nourishment. One evening he took one of the so-called knives, which are merely bits of tin in the shape of a knife, and with this he sawed at his throat till he nearly cut his head off. Up to that time the knives were

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kept constantly in the cells, but afterwards they were not allowed except at dinner-time on the days when meat was served out, and were removed after dinner with the empty tins. This gave rise to the saying that at Parkhurst Prison suicide was only allowed on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between eleven and one o'clock, as, before the new diet came in, those were meat days. A commoner form of suicide was by hanging, and there were other and more peculiar methods. There was a black man undergoing a life sentence for murder who made up his mind to starve himself to death. He had a most violent temper, and his language was perfectly appalling. After being some time in prison one's ear gets accustomed to swearing, for many of the prisoners habitually use the foulest possible language both to their fellow-prisoners and to officers ; but I never in my life heard anything like this man's combinations of profanity and obscenity. Having resolved to live no longer, he obstinately refused all food or liquid for several days, whereupon the doctors attempted to feed him by artificial means. As they could not force the feeding-tube between his teeth they made shift to feed him through his nose. About an hour afterwards he was found dead from a sort of con-

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vulsion or paroxysm of rage at the doctors having succeeded in feeding him against his will. I should say he could very well be spared. Another somewhat similar case that had a less gruesome ending happened at Wormwood Scrubs. A man there had the appalling sentence of imprisonment for his 'natural life,' and he richly deserved it. He was one of a notorious gang of blackmailers, who drove more than one person to suicide through falling into their clutches. He also, like the black man, deliberately tried to starve himself to death, and was only kept alive by artificial feeding for ten days, after he had reduced himself to a skeleton and as nearly as possible gained his object. He then threw the game up and changed his mind, but was sent to Parkhurst as an invalid. I used to see him about there, though he being one of the ordinary prisoners, I, as a 'star,' had nothing to do with him directly. When I last saw him he was about as broad as he was long, so it was evident that neither his bout of starvation nor his subsequent prison treatment had disagreed with him much. I learned that he was very much disliked, for though, of course, in prison, all are presumably tarred with the same brush, and none can afford to put on superior airs, there are a certain class

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who are always looked down upon by their fellow-prisoners. Blackmailers are included among these, and rightly so, for a more detestable crime it is impossible to imagine. There need never be any regret when one of them puts himself out of the way.



## XII

### 'BALMIES'

IN an earlier chapter I said that Parkhurst was half a hospital and half a lunatic asylum, and in a general sense that is true enough. It is intended to be a special place of confinement for invalid or weak-minded prisoners, who are brought there from all the other convict prisons as soon as their condition is considered serious. But yet it is not, properly speaking, a criminal lunatic prison. Broadmoor is expressly designed for that purpose, and until about two years ago no prisoner certified to be insane was kept anywhere except at Broadmoor. About May, 1900, however, when a large new wing of the hospital at Parkhurst had just been finished, Broadmoor was so full that the authorities decided to assign this new wing for the time being to certified lunatics.

It thereupon became in a way a separate institution from the rest of the prison, the official staff and the discipline being altogether different.

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The unfortunate lunatics of this wing are treated somewhat in the same way as those at Broadmoor. They do no work, they have a liberal diet, they are allowed to talk as much as they please, and they are only put in the cells at night, the day being spent in an association ward, where they occupy themselves in any sort of harmless way. They also have separate grounds, completely walled off, where there are trees, seats, and flower-beds.

Here they are allowed to sit or walk about as they choose for several hours a day, of course with officers in charge of them to prevent their doing themselves or one another an injury. In short, these men being really and unmistakably mad, are not under punishment as criminals, but under treatment as lunatics; and if there had been room for them at Broadmoor, not one of them would have remained at Parkhurst after being certified insane. The present arrangement is not, however, to be permanent, and is only provisional, pending the enlargement of Broadmoor. It has nothing to do with Parkhurst Prison proper, and I have only referred to it here in connection with another subject.\*

\* Since writing the above I hear all the certified lunatics have been removed to Broadmoor.

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Apart from prisoners certified to be insane, such as I have just described, there are a great many who are more or less touched in the top story, or who succeed in making it believed that they are so. These are officially classed as 'W.M.'—that is, weak-minded—but are invariably known colloquially as 'balmies.' There were about ninety of them at Parkhurst when I was there, and many of them were very difficult to manage, and made themselves very offensive to the other prisoners and to the officers. Most of them, doubtless, were really men of feeble intellect, or partially demented, either naturally or as the result of drink or other vices. But there were certainly among them not a few absolutely sane, who merely played the 'balmy' in order to get less work and to escape with less punishment for bad conduct, as the 'W.M.'s' are always let off more lightly for offences than other prisoners. It is very difficult for the doctors in some cases to make sure whether a man is genuinely off his head, or whether he is only shamming; for many old convicts are such accomplished actors they are able to imitate the peculiarities of idiocy with wonderful correctness, until the habit becomes second nature. The doctors have neither the time nor the opportunity to watch them closely

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enough, and so they give them the benefit of the doubt and class them as ‘ W.M.’s.’ It sometimes happens, moreover, that a man who appears to be playing ‘ balmy,’ and not doing it at all cleverly either, turns out in the end to be as mad as a hatter. It is, therefore, perhaps better for the doctors to be a little credulous than for prisoners to be punished who are not responsible for their actions.

For the first three years that I was at Parkhurst the ‘ Balmies ’ were scattered all over the place, some of them being in each hall. The very worst of all had to work in parties by themselves ; but the others used to work in the ordinary parties, very often causing the greatest possible trouble, not only to the officers, but to their fellow prisoners. One party, No. 12, that I was in, out on the farm, contained at one time no fewer than seven of these ‘ W.M.’s.’ Some of them were perfectly harmless ; but the remainder were a perpetual nuisance, trying to quarrel with the men and fighting among themselves. A few months before I left, however, all the ‘ W.M.’s’ were brought together in one hall, which happened to be the one that I was in. They were placed on the two lower wards, and I was on the ward just

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above them. They were over eighty in number, and I have no hesitation in saying that some of them were neither more nor less than wild beasts. Night after night, just when we were getting off to sleep, one or more of them would rouse the whole hall by smashing up their cells, tearing up clothes, breaking windows, and destroying what little furniture there was. When the officers went to remove them to the silent cells at the back of the punishment cells, where they could do no more mischief, they would shriek and scream that the officers were knocking them about with their koshes and killing them. This, of course, would be heard all through the hall, waking up all the other prisoners, and in particular exciting the other weak-minded ones who had been quiet before, but who now began banging their doors, shouting and yelling, and making the place a perfect pandemonium. After the new arrangement of all the 'Balmies' going together in one hall, special parties were formed for them to work by themselves, and they no longer mixed in any way with other prisoners, and were allowed more license in the way of talking. Thus, though we suffered from them at night, we were relieved of their company during the day.

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That was decidedly a step in the right direction, for the practice of putting sane and insane prisoners together could not be too strongly condemned. It was bad for the ‘ W.M.’s,’ as well as for the other prisoners, and most unfair to the officers. On one occasion, on a Sunday, I saw one of these semi-lunatics, while we were out for exercise, speak to one of the principal warders, Mr. M——, as if he had some request to make, and then suddenly, without rhyme or reason, he poked his thumbs into the officer’s eyes and tried his hardest to gouge them out. Other officers ran to the principal warder’s assistance, whereupon the man seized one of them by the hand and literally made his teeth meet through it. The principal warder had the narrowest escape of being blinded, and one of his eyes was terribly discoloured. Another time one of them laid wait for an officer, Mr. H——, who was one of the kindest-hearted men in the prison, and when his cell door was opened after dinner struck him a terrific blow in the face with his hobnailed boot, just missing his eye by about half an inch.

Living as I did in ‘ B ’ hall for nearly three years, and being the greater part of that time one of the orderlies, I saw scores of men being taken into

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the punishment cells, which are situated on the ground-floor, so to speak, of that hall. Some of the 'W.M.'s' took as many as five or six officers to get them along, for these semi-lunatics are often possessed of supernatural strength, and their violence and obstinacy are indescribable. I must say that, though they constantly bit, kicked, and did everything they could to injure the officers, I never once saw the latter use undue force. I do not for a moment mean to say they handled the men as if they were pieces of valuable china, but I certainly do say this: that many a time when I myself would have given a man a pretty sharp crack with a kosh, I have seen the officers keep their temper in a most extraordinary way. Of course, the great majority of men going to punishment walk along quite submissively, without giving the slightest trouble; but with the 'W.M.'s' no one can tell for an instant what may happen.

There is need of a reform of the prison system with regard to weak-minded prisoners, and nothing but a knowledge of the facts is required to show what that reform should be. All the weak-minded men should be placed in a separate part of the prison, having their own set of officers to look after them, and them alone, very much as is the

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case with the certified lunatics, whose management is so excellent it could not well be better. Of course, the ‘ W.M.’s ’ should be made to work, which most of them are quite able to do. If not, their number would soon be doubled by men playing ‘ balmy.’ The difficulty is that while some first-rate workmen have a screw loose on a particular question, which makes them irresponsible for their actions at times, others have a mania for idleness, which is not assumed, but is simply their particular form of madness. There was one of these, named B——, who, when I left Parkhurst, had spent over eleven years in prison without doing a stroke of work. He was otherwise remarkably docile and well conducted, and he kept his cell in apple-pie order, and all his furniture, utensils, pint mugs, and other belongings beautifully clean. But he doggedly refused to do any other kind of work whatsoever. All kinds of punishments had been tried—for ‘ refusing to labour,’ as it is called, is a serious offence in prison—but without the slightest effect. He underwent his punishment without a murmur, and then declined to work as positively as ever. Every possible device was resorted to for years to compel or persuade him to turn his hand to



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some sort of work, but all in vain. He simply would not, and there was an end of it. Shortly before I left he was certified to be a lunatic, and there is little doubt he had been mad for a long time, though the only sign he showed of it was refusing to work. It is possible the long period of idleness, with nothing to occupy his mind except the fixed idea he had resolved upon, may have at last affected his brain. But I believe no other such instance is known, for although many sane prisoners refuse to labour for a time, they almost invariably think better of it, and behave like sensible men, when they have been punished once or twice.

At all events, a few exceptional cases should by no means be considered valid objections to an important measure of prison reform. The rule to be followed is clear enough. Every prisoner whose behaviour is so different from the normal that he is classed 'W.M.' by the medical authorities should be entirely removed from the other prisoners, and made to serve out his sentence in a separate place and under separate conditions.

The great difficulty that the prison authorities have with these men is when the time arrives for their release. I believe now that, unless their

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friends are in a position to look after them, they have to serve their full sentences, and are unable to gain the remission allowed to their saner brothers in distress, and this is certainly as it should be, for why release a man who is irresponsible for his actions a day sooner than is absolutely necessary? It only means that he will have an earlier chance of committing another crime. But, of course, when a man has served his full sentence, unless he is certified insane, it is impossible to prevent him going where he will. Many of these ‘W.M.’s’ are certainly not mad enough to be sent to a lunatic asylum; but, on the other hand, they are no doubt dangerous, and it is a most difficult problem for the Prison Commissioners to know what to do with them. One thing I am quite sure of—they should not be allowed whilst in prison to be anywhere near the other men, and should have a different set of officers to look after them, and a hall to themselves.

## XIII

### 'COPPERS'

EVERY prisoner has the right to make an open and straightforward complaint if he feels himself wronged in any way, but that is quite a different thing from secret tale-bearing, and though it may be carried to a vexatious extent, no one objects to it on the score of meanness or treachery. In every walk of life there are malicious people who take unreasoning dislikes, and who will go to a great deal of trouble and run all sorts of risks to gratify their animosity against others who have done them no harm. They are worse than Ishmaelites, for their hand is against every man, though no man's hand may be against them. Now, a 'copper' is one who acts as a spy and tells the officers stories about the prisoners, and the Governor and head officers stories about their subordinates. These stories have to be supported by some sort of evidence, and when none exists the 'copper' does not hesitate to fabricate it, or to trick his victim into

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some false step in order to supply it. ‘Coppers’ are loathed and despised by every one, officers and prisoners alike, but I am sorry to say they sometimes gain their ends, and are allowed to exercise influence and do a deal of mischief after their real character has been completely exposed.

One of the most marvellous, and without exception the most repulsive, of these Calibans that I ever came across was an elderly financier named L——, who had been sent to penal servitude for fraud. He had a fine head, of the Oriental cast, but there his good looks ended. His body and limbs reminded one of nothing so much as those weird antediluvian reptiles that E. T. Reed used to depict in his ‘Prehistoric Peeps’ in *Punch*. I had been at Parkhurst about eight months when he arrived after doing his separate confinement at Lewes, and the first time I saw or heard of him was when I was one of the infirmary orderlies in ‘B’ hall. While busy cleaning one morning, I heard a tremendous banging at one of the cell doors, and thinking some prisoner had been suddenly taken ill, I went and told the officer, who was some way down the ward. On the cell door being opened, the man demanded to be let out to get some water, just as

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if he had a right to leave his cell whenever he pleased. The insolence of his tone and manner were almost past belief. The officer quietly told him that whenever he wanted anything he must drop his indicator, and not hammer at the cell door, and, moreover, that he could not do exactly as he liked in prison—a fact which seemed never to occur to him. I afterwards learnt that his conduct at Holloway whilst awaiting trial had been about as bad as it could be. He was always making unfounded complaints against the officers, trying to get them into trouble, and he made himself such a nuisance that when he was sentenced to eight years' penal servitude there was much rejoicing among some of the officials. Being only a bird of passage at Holloway, he might try and take such liberties, but one would have thought he would have been taught to behave himself whilst at Lewes. Yet when he came to Parkhurst his arrogance and insubordination knew no bounds.

As soon as he was allowed to go out he joined the hospital working party that I was in, but he never did a stroke of work. The work was light enough, but not nearly light enough for him. If told to wheel a barrow he would feebly push it along for a couple of yards or so, and then stop

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and groan, declaring he was suffering from asthma, heart disease, and every imaginable ill under the sun. Though talking is strictly forbidden, the first day he was out with us he at once tried to enter into a voluble conversation with the officer. By way of a pleasant opening he began by remarking, with a sweep of his hand, and at the top of his voice, so that all might hear, that it was a terrible thing for a gentleman and an honest man like himself to have to work with ‘all those murderers and thieves.’ As nearly all of us in the party were there for crimes less serious than his, this virtuous indignation caused considerable amusement, though some of the men were furious at being called names by such a specimen of gentility.

L—— was always complaining about the food, the officers, the orderlies—everything and everybody, in fact. He went to see the Governor almost every day and the Directors and Visiting Magistrates whenever they came on their periodical visits, always with a long list of grievances, the chief of which was that he had been wrongly convicted. One day, when I was orderly, he made a remark in a loud tone, so that I could not help hearing it, which was evidently intended to be

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personal. I happened to be carrying a slop-pail, which is one of the orderly's duties—not one of the pleasantest, perhaps, but still a necessary one. That, however, was not the view of our high and mighty friend, so when he saw what I was doing, he called out :

‘If he’s a gentleman he wouldn’t do that. I wouldn’t.’

The officer informed him he would have to do whatever he was told, but he replied they would never make a man ‘who held the position he did outside’ do menial work. As a fact, I believe his position outside was very much the same as that of a money-lender’s tout. I must say for the man, however, that he had at times a touch of humour.

One day, when he was grumbling as usual about the food and the ‘attendance’ (meaning the orderlies), an officer said to him :

‘You are always complaining about something. Remember what the Governor told you, that you are not at the Hotel Cecil.’

‘No,’ he replied, ‘but in some ways I am better off here than I should be there.’

‘How’s that?’ asked the officer, astonished at such an admission from a man who was never tired of abusing everything in the prison.

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‘Well,’ he replied, ‘I have nothing to pay here and I have a lord-in-waiting.’

It was not so bad, considering the circumstances, and if he had never been guilty of any worse remarks than that nobody would have minded his vagaries.

This L—— was a thorough-paced ‘copper,’ ever on the watch to catch prisoners or officers tripping, and sticking at no lie to get anybody into trouble. Himself incessantly breaking rules, he one day had the impudence to report to the Governor that the officer who had charge of the party he was in allowed all the men to talk with the exception of himself! He added that the same officer had kicked one of the men on the leg. Now, to accuse an officer of personal violence on one of the men is to make a most grave charge. The Governor therefore held a strict investigation of the facts, and found there was not a word of truth in the statement. He consequently put L—— back for the Visiting Magistrates, to be tried for having made a false accusation against an officer, rightly considering that no punishment he could give (as the punishments to be inflicted by Governors are very much restricted) would be adequate to the case. The next time the Visiting



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Magistrates came L—— was taken before them. Knowing that he was in a serious mess, he began crying, and—will it be believed?—he actually gained the sympathy of men who must have had abundant experience of such hypocrites. He tried to make out that, though it was true the officer had kicked a prisoner, he had not really intended to charge him with the offence. To the astonishment of everyone in the prison, he was let off with a severe reprimand, which he no doubt regarded as an excellent joke, instead of being sharply punished, as he ought to have been.

This act of weakness on the part of the Visiting Magistrates was most unjust, not only to the officer who had been falsely accused, but also to the other prisoners. It is difficult to understand on what grounds L—— was let off. If the charge he made had been proved the officer would probably have been instantly dismissed from the service, or, at the least, such a black mark would have been put against his record that he would have had no chance of promotion. There are always a large class of prisoners who are delighted to see an officer get into trouble, no matter how good or kind he may have been to them, and L—— no doubt counted on his false accusation

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being supported by equally false testimony. When it broke down completely, therefore, it was very bad policy of the Visiting Magistrates, and grossly unfair to the officers generally, to treat it as a trifling breach of discipline. The result was that many thought there must have been some ground for it ; while prisoners who had lost remission marks and been sent to the punishment cells for far less serious offences than falsely accusing an officer felt bitterly aggrieved. But the influence some of these ‘coppers’ manage to exert over the authorities is notorious, and is well-nigh incomprehensible. It seems to be a survival of the bad old times of Jonathan Wild and the ‘thief takers,’ when every prison contained a number of spies and informers, themselves the worst of criminals.

L—— was always petitioning the Home Secretary for release on all possible grounds. One week it would be because he was suffering from cataract, though why that should matter when many totally blind men were kept in prison he did not explain. If that did no good, the next time he would develop some incurable internal disease—anything at all to get out. His petitions were of no avail, as far as I know, but he evidently

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believed they would have the desired effect if he persevered long enough. The year after he arrived at Parkhurst he got leave somehow or other to write a very long document, which was allowed to be sent to his relations, with instructions that several thousand copies should be printed and addressed to all the Masonic Lodges in the kingdom. This paper contained a full statement of L——'s case, according to his own way of putting it. I believe, however, that it was of such a libellous nature that no one would print it. Why L—— should have thought the Freemasons would rise in a body over the question of his release no one knows, but certainly for the first year he lived and thrived on the hope of obtaining his release by that means.

Though L—— put on such airs, his cell was filthily kept. When his door was opened first thing in the morning to collect the slops, it was like standing over an open sewer, enough to knock one down. Yet there was no one more fastidious about his food or his personal comforts. On one occasion he persuaded the medical officer, forgetting, I suppose, that L—— was a Jew, to order him bacon for breakfast. The nurse in charge of the infirmary ward that he was then in, however,

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mentioned the fact to the Rabbi, knowing, of course, that Jews are strictly prohibited from eating bacon. The Rabbi, who was a very good sort of man, and who took every trouble to look after the prisoners of his faith, went and gave L—— a severe lecture, and told him he should see the medical officer and have the bacon stopped. That afternoon, when the officer told L—— this on his way to exercise, I heard him say:

‘If that —— old Rabbi gets my bacon stopped I shall change my religion, as my stomach is more use to me than my religion.’

As it happened, nevertheless, his bacon was stopped, but he did not change his religion. He made a great fuss about it, saying that he was a ‘reformed’ Jew, and that ‘reformed’ Jews were allowed to eat anything they liked. But he got no more bacon, and there was the end of his ‘reformation.’ When he petitioned to be let out on the ground that a cataract was forming, there really was, I believe, something the matter with his eyes; and the authorities replied that, if an operation became necessary, an oculist would be sent down to perform it in the prison. But that did not suit him at all. He insisted that he must be let out, and that an operation in prison would

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do him no good, because his eye trouble was only caused by his crying so much at being compelled to associate with such scum of the earth as all his fellow-prisoners were! He was under an eight years' sentence, and, personally speaking, I think it would not have been any loss to anyone if it had been eighteen. A man who behaved as he did in prison could not be worth much outside.

Another instance I came across was that of a certain man named C——, who was undergoing a long sentence for defrauding two well-known American ladies. A more despicable individual I never came across. I never had anything to do with him personally, except when he was taken into the hospital every now and then for protection; but I saw quite enough of him to learn what an odious creature he was. The whole of his existence whilst at Parkhurst was spent in trying to get both officers and prisoners into trouble; and, as by some inexplicable means he got some of the high officials thoroughly to believe in him, the mischief he did was almost incredible. He began in this way. He did not belong to the 'star' class, but he only had one letter on his arm, a sign that he had not undergone penal servitude before, though he

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must have suffered imprisonment of some sort. The ‘star’ is never refused to first offenders, except for one offence, though, of course, if a first offender’s conduct in prison were outrageously bad, the authorities could remove him from the ‘star’ class to the ordinaries if they thought fit to do so. In the party C—— first worked with he succeeded in making friends with a man whom I will call X——. He presently told X—— that if ever he wanted to ‘pass a stiff’—that is, to send a letter surreptitiously out of prison—he knew of an officer who would do it for him.

Now, there is nothing more tempting to most prisoners than the opportunity of writing freely to their friends without their letters being read by the officials; and X——, never doubting C——’s good faith, told him he would be very glad to avail himself of his offer. It was thereupon arranged that X—— should write his letter and hand it to C—— on a certain date. On the very day, however, when X—— had his letter ready, the party were suddenly marched off for a special search. X—— managed somehow or other to destroy his letter before his turn came, and no suspicion so far rested on C——, who professed

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to have been most anxious for X——, and greatly relieved that he had been able to get rid of the letter. It was then agreed that X—— should write another letter and pass it to C—— on their way to chapel next morning. That evening X——'s cell was visited by some of the officers, he and his cell were thoroughly searched, and the letter was found. I forget the exact punishment he got, but it was, I remember, a very severe one.

The possession of a piece of pencil and paper and writing a letter are a most serious offence, and any prisoner caught at it would be sent to solitary confinement for a considerable period, and lose weeks, if not months, of remission. Any officer found guilty of passing a letter out of prison would be liable to instant dismissal, as this comes under what is called 'trafficking'—an unpardonable offence. It speedily became known that the whole thing was a plot of C——'s to get X—— into trouble and gain favour and importance for himself; and this aroused such resentment against him that he had not only to be removed from his party, but to be taken into hospital for protection. If the prisoners had got him in their hands they would assuredly have

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done him serious injury to avenge his treachery to X——; for a more contemptible thing for one man to do towards another who had never injured him in the least it is impossible to imagine.

When C—— had recovered from the imaginary illness for which he was sent to hospital, the great difficulty was to know what to do with him. It was impossible to put him to work in any party, because it was a foregone conclusion that the men would take the first chance of going for him. The extraordinary result followed, therefore, that he was given the ‘red collar.’ This is one of the greatest privileges that can be given to any prisoner, and one which was never given before to any but a ‘blue collar’ man—that is, one who had served at least three years with good conduct; whereas C—— had only been fifteen months in prison when he was made a ‘red collar’ man and allowed all the privileges of that class. ‘Red collar’ men are practically free agents, doing their work as they think fit. Although excluded from the workshops or working parties outside their particular employment, they are released from the constant presence and supervision of an officer, which to most men is so intensely irritating.



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C—— was put to work in the garden, where, as might have been expected, he ruined everything he touched, as he had not the remotest knowledge of gardening. Not that he ever pretended to do any honest labour. He merely swaggered about on the strength of his red collar, as if it had been some sort of order of merit ; and all the while he continued to justify the name he had gained of ‘the prison spy’ by watching and prying and taking advantage of his comparative liberty to carry lying reports about the officers and men. Even then his life was never safe. For considerably more than a year he was under special protection, and, in spite of all, he came very near getting his deserts. The hatred of him among the prisoners was so intense they did not care what happened to themselves if they could only get at him. One day, coming out of chapel, some of them set on him, evidently by prearrangement, and it would have gone hard with him if the passage had been wide enough for them to surround him. As it was, the officers were able to hustle him away, I think to everyone’s regret. After that he was assigned a special place in chapel, near where an officer sat, just in front of the stairs, and he was given a cell at the

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end of one of the wards and at the top of the staircase, so that he had not to pass anyone else's cell to get to his own. In the summer of 1900 things came to a crisis. The way C—— behaved had become such a scandal that at last it reached the ears of the prison authorities at the Home Office, who must have had an inkling of it some time before. At all events, an imperative order came to Parkhurst that C—— was to be transferred to Portland. He did his best to evade the order by counterfeiting heart disease, but the medical officer and doctors were not to be deceived, and to Portland he went, to the great relief of everybody he left behind him.

There was another of these ‘coppers,’ named G——, who ran a very narrow risk of losing his life whilst I was at Parkhurst. When at a local prison, undergoing a separate confinement, he had, I believe, with the connivance of some of the officials there, set a trap for one of the officers in this way : He told this officer that if he would take a letter out of the prison for him surreptitiously he would receive £5 from one of the prisoner's friends outside. The officer agreed to do what was required, with the result that when he went to the appointed place to receive

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the expected £5 he was confronted with an official, and it ended in his being dismissed the service.

When this man came to Parkhurst his reputation as a 'copper' had preceded him; for somehow or other things like this always become known in prisons. The officers and prisoners, therefore, were on the look-out, and as he soon began playing the same tricks again, he had to be taken into hospital for protection, as C—— had later on. This occurred before C——'s exploits. After having been detained in hospital for several weeks he was sent out to work again, but was given a job by himself, so that he did not come into contact with any of the other men except in the hall. He had not been out at work more than a couple of days, however, when, as he was coming out of his cell one morning on his way to chapel, some of the men made a rush for him, and as nearly as possible got him over the railing. If they had succeeded he would have fallen between 20 and 30 feet on to an asphalt pavement, and would most likely have been killed. As it was, he managed to cling on to the top of the railing just long enough for one of the officers to come up and stop the scrimmage. The man then attended chapel, and immediately afterwards went 'special

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sick,’ and was taken to hospital. When examined there it was found that he had a bruise on his back as big as a plate.

I never saw a man in such a state of abject terror before or since. Although some hours had passed since the scrimmage, he could scarcely walk or speak from sheer fright, and for some time afterwards it was with the greatest difficulty he could be persuaded to go out of his cell for a minute. He was soon transferred to another prison, as the feeling was so bitter against him at Parkhurst it was not considered safe for him to remain there.

I am sure that ‘coppering’ such as I have described would never be countenanced under Captain E—— W——. Neither he nor Mr. M——, the chief warder, would listen to any tales, and under them men like G—— and C—— would have found it very unprofitable to behave as they did.

This is as it should be, for it is hard enough for the majority of men to keep out of trouble, so as to gain the maximum remission they are entitled to, without having to be eternally on the look-out lest they should be tripped up or have some low trick played on them by their fellow-prisoners.

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Something of this sort once happened to me, and though, luckily, nothing came of it, I may just mention it, because it gives a good idea of how a prisoner may incur punishment without any fault of his own. One morning, on going to the box where I kept my things for polishing the steel and iron work of the stairs, I found among them a 'stiff'—that is, a secret letter. It was anonymous, and was written in pencil on a small piece of toilet-paper, folded up so that it might have passed for a bit of rag or cotton waste. How long it had been there I do not know, for it was not dated; but it warned me to be very careful whenever I went into my cell after working to search it thoroughly, because the writer had overheard two men say they were going to try to get another man whose cell was close to mine to pop in when he had a chance, and hide a piece of pencil in my cell. If he had done so the pencil would have been sure to be found the next time my cell was searched (which, as a rule, is about once a fortnight), and naturally I should have been punished for it. Denials in such a case would have been useless, for with the evidence of the thing itself found in my cell I could not have expected the authorities to believe I knew nothing about it.

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I searched every nook and corner of my cell, but never found any pencil, and it is quite possible the letter itself may have been only a scare or a trick of some kind. There was nothing to show where it came from, though afterwards I had an inkling of who might have written it. I showed it to one of the priests, and by his advice destroyed it, as, if discovered by an officer, it might have been traced to the writer, and got some man into a scrape who had only warned me out of kindness.

## XIV

### ‘ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN’

IN addition to the ‘balmies,’ the ‘coppers,’ and the ‘incorrigibles,’ my attention was attracted in prison by a good many men whom I can only call eccentrics or nondescripts, men not worth any lengthy notice, but yet helping by their very oddity to fill up the picture. One of these was a most curious animal, named W——. Though he was anything but a nice person in the ordinary sense of the word, his peculiarity was an extreme nicety as to his food. No gourmand at Prince’s could be more mightily offended than he was if anything was offered him the least bit unpalatable or indifferently served. I heard him one day in the hospital threaten to commit suicide by throwing himself over the landing because his bacon was not cooked exactly to his liking. It might naturally have been concluded that this fine gentleman was accustomed when outside to live on the fat of the land. Yet on his discharge he had to

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be taken to one of the Prisoners' Aid Society homes, as he was absolutely destitute. His relatives refused to have anything to do with him, and not without reason. I learned that, when he had been in prison before and been released, one of his brothers took him to live with him, but, because his sister-in-law objected to his making free with her husband's clothes in his absence, he set upon her and knocked her clean through the door. As, I suppose, they did not wish to run the risk of a similar experience again, they gave him the cold shoulder on his second discharge. He was made up of indolence and selfishness, but yet had a most exalted opinion of himself, as if he were entitled to the lion's share of the best of everything in this life, without ever doing anything to earn it or deserve it.

Another very extraordinary specimen was undergoing a twenty years' sentence for burglary or something of this description. He had been released owing to ill-health after doing about eight years, but had forfeited his ticket-of-leave by some breach of the law and been sent back to serve the remaining twelve years of his original sentence. The whole time I was at Parkhurst I never knew that man do one stroke of work. He lived en-



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tirely in hospital, and lay in bed all day whenever he liked, and the only way he repaid the endless kindness shown him by the medical officer and officers was to get into the most violent rage with them on the slightest provocation and throw things at their heads. He well knew that the only punishment he could be compelled to undergo was the loss of so many marks and of his class, as his heart was affected in some way. This merely meant the curtailment of his letter-writing, and, after the new rules came into operation, the forfeiture of the privilege of talking on Sunday afternoon, which was allowed to 'blue collar' men—that is, those who had been three years in prison with good conduct. As he probably would only go out of prison to come back again, and his taste for correspondence was limited, these penalties really amounted to nothing at all. I ought properly to have classed this man with the incorrigibles, but I have placed him rather among the curiosities, on account of one strange feature he had, which might almost be called a redeeming quality. Like Count Fosco in 'The Woman in White,' he loved birds and exercised a weird sort of fascination over them. He used to entice the sparrows and starlings into his cell by laying bread-

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crumbs down his ventilator, and when once he got them in he used to catch them, clip their wings with the shears, which were made to serve for nail scissors, and tame them in a most extraordinary way. Bird-catching and bird-keeping, I need hardly say, are not encouraged by the regulations, but this man had such a way of breaking much more important rules with impunity that this was looked upon as a mere amiable weakness. He was allowed to turn his cell into an aviary, since the starlings and sparrows seemed not only willing, but eager, to share his captivity. Who knows but that he had mistaken his vocation in taking to robbery, or that under his forbidding exterior he had the genius of a great naturalist ?

I came across many people at Parkhurst whose cases I had read about outside. One man who had been manager or secretary to a well-known company in the City, and had received a heavy sentence for misappropriating bonds to a large amount, told me the way he evaded arrest for a long time, which was rather original. He got away to the Continent, and, after much travelling about, settled down in Paris. Well knowing that the police were on his trail, however, he constantly changed his abode. The difficulty was to

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know what to do with himself during the day, so as to escape the notice of the lynx-eyed *mouchard*. It occurred to him that the Eiffel Tower would be airy and pleasant, and that he might enjoy more privacy among the crowds of Cook tourists, Americans, and provincials who frequent that famous edifice, than he would in the cafés on the earth below. Accordingly, he used to make for the Tower as soon as he left his hotel each morning, and stay up there till it was time to descend and seek a new sleeping-place. The plan seems to have worked very well, and perhaps, if fancied security had not lulled him into over-confidence, his business address might still have been 'Monsieur Chose, Tour Eiffel, Paris.' However, at last he made himself conspicuous in some way, and was arrested. My own impression is that the charms of his lofty abode began to pall upon him, and that he preferred to take his chance of Parkhurst, if only for a change.

Another man I came across had gone through a singular experience. He was prosecuted for fraud as a trustee, and fled the country, but was arrested in Belgium, where he was in prison for some time while his extradition was being arranged for. He was brought back to England, but the evidence

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being insufficient, the case did not come on for trial, and he was discharged. He immediately went abroad. In the meantime fresh facts against him came to light, and the police went in search of him again, and after a considerable time he was discovered in Italy and arrested for extradition.

On his arrival in England, the case being made clear, he was sentenced to penal servitude, and came to Parkhurst. He was a man of most unusual build, very tall—I should say 6 feet 6 inches or 6 feet 7 inches—but loosely put together, with arms quite out of proportion to the rest of his body, the tips of his fingers almost reaching to his knees, like a gorilla. On account of his great size, the ordinary prison diet was not considered enough for him, so he had full labour diet, and also light labour diet as well. This meant that he had nearly a quartern loaf of bread per day. How he could possibly stuff such a quantity down I cannot imagine.

He told me that when he was arrested in Italy they put two pairs of handcuffs on him, because he looked so big they thought one pair would not hold him. He was very lazy, and always tried to get out of doing any work, the truth being, I suppose, that, notwithstanding his size, he

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was not really strong. Some time after I went to Parkhurst he was sent off to Portland, and the last I heard of him was that he had completely broken down, and had been in hospital for many months.

One of the most agreeable men I met in prison was a Jew who had been convicted of forging bonds, which he had been doing for years without being detected. Curiously enough he came to grief in the end through being arrested on a charge of which he was perfectly innocent. A crime had been committed by some men of whom it was believed he was an accomplice, though, in fact, he had nothing at all to do with them, and his house was searched. The police entirely failed to find what they were looking for, but quite unexpectedly they came upon forged bonds, etc., for a very large amount. Upon this clue they got further evidence, and he was put on his trial for forgery, convicted, and condemned to a long term of penal servitude. But for this accident he might have lived in the highest respectability, without a shadow on his character, for many years longer, as many others equally guilty are no doubt doing at this moment. I was able to walk with him on one or two Sunday afternoons, and I found

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him an exceedingly well-informed man, and an accomplished linguist, and I could well understand his having filled a good social position without even his most intimate friends suspecting how he got his income.

I saw several men whose cases I knew a good deal about, and some whom I knew by sight, among them two with whom I was slightly acquainted. I was as much surprised to meet them there as they probably were to meet me. One of them went out to the war in South Africa soon after his discharge from prison, and after seeing a good deal of fighting, died of enteric—possibly a happy release, as his family, I believe, disowned him. That is not, perhaps, the best way of getting a man to retrieve his past, for when he leaves prison with the brand of the broad arrow upon him, unless he has private means, or his friends are able and willing to help him, he stands very little chance of making a fresh start, especially if he has not been brought up to any trade or profession.

There was another man who, though his life-story was only too tragic, may well be classed among the curiosities. He had originally been a blue-jacket, but lost an arm through some accident,

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and was discharged while still comparatively young. He then learnt sign-painting, and made quite a comfortable income. He married, but his married life did not turn out to be a very happy one. After having been married about eleven years, a child arrived on the scene, but the wife confessed that he was not the father of it, and he refused to allow her to keep the child in his house, so it was placed out somewhere to be looked after, and his wife went out to work to earn money enough to pay for its keep, so that it should not be any burden upon him. To this he did not object, and he further allowed the woman to remain under his roof. This arrangement lasted for eighteen months.

All this time, nevertheless, he had been brooding over it, and one night, without giving her any warning, he went into her room with a coal-hammer and battered her head in while she slept. He then ran out and threw himself under a tram-car, with the intention of being killed. Instead of that, however, he was only very badly injured, his remaining arm being much crushed. After a long time in hospital, he recovered sufficiently to stand his trial, and was, of course, found guilty of murder and condemned to be hanged. It

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looked as if nothing could save him, for there was nothing to show that he was out of his mind when he committed the murder, though, if he had lost his own life under the tramcar, a jury would most likely have brought in a verdict of temporary insanity. At all events, the authorities must have considered the circumstances exceptional, for, after two respites, a few hours before the date fixed for his execution two gentlemen from the Home Office visited him in his cell and invited him to give his own version of the affair. According to what he told me, he disclosed everything quite truthfully. Upon that, he assured me, one of the gentlemen patted him on the shoulder and said : ‘ Well, I should have done the same.’ I can’t say that I quite believe that, but he told me the whole story one Sunday.

Next day he received formal notice that the death sentence had been commuted to penal servitude for life. Being totally helpless, he was sent to Parkhurst, where he had been about a year or two when I first made his acquaintance. His arm was so fixed when he was first imprisoned that he could not use his hand at all, except to feed himself, and everything else had to be done for him as if he were a baby. I found him a man



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of very quiet disposition on the whole, though a good deal given to mild grumbling, but he had got two ideas immovably in his head. One was that, because his wife had deceived him, it was no crime to put her to death; and because the gentleman from the Home Office had told him he would have done the same, therefore he ought to have got a free pardon and been released.

It was of no use to point out that he had condoned his wife's guilt by allowing her to keep his house for eighteen months, and that the provocation had been amply taken into account by the commutation of the death sentence. He did not seem to consider that any mercy at all, and he stuck to it that he was entitled to be released and would be released before long.

In a petition to the Secretary of State, he told me, he had urged that he should be let out soon, because, if he were kept in prison for a long term, he would not be able to earn his living afterwards. Of course, the answer was 'No grounds,' but though he was told he need not trouble himself about his living, since the Government were bound to feed him and clothe him and take the best of care of him, he still thought himself very hardly used, and continued to believe he would

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get a free pardon. The other point on which he was off his balance was religion. He had read his Bible till he knew it almost by heart, and was firmly convinced that he had been born again and cleansed from all sin, and was already saved. He was never tired of talking about this and declaring his readiness to die at any moment, because he would go straight to heaven. But, on the other hand, he did not seem to believe that many of his fellow-prisoners had much to look forward to but everlasting fire. Nothing would make him admit that the same grace, by which he had been saved, might be extended to us, and I really believe it would have destroyed the comfort his religion gave him if he had thought so. Those were his two peculiarities: he wanted a free pardon at once, and he wanted heaven all to himself. Otherwise he was a fairly sensible man, and was, as a rule, inoffensive and pleasant spoken.

I have mentioned somewhere that among the miscellaneous collection of malefactors at Parkhurst there were several clergymen. One of these had previously been well known in the literary world, some of his books being highly thought of; but I cannot say he showed his

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abilities to advantage in prison, least of all in an attempt he made to escape—an attempt which he might have known was doomed to certain failure with very unpleasant consequences to himself. One afternoon he and another prisoner, who had been a sailor, were working out on the farm not far from the fence which divides the farm lands from the forest, and the officer was engaged in showing another man something to do with his work. Seeing their opportunity, as they thought, they made a run for the fence, and, though it was 8 or 9 feet high, they managed to get over it. Just as they dropped on the other side, however, they were observed by one of the civil guards, who are armed with carbines loaded with slugs. The guard instantly fired and wounded the clergyman, but not badly enough to stop him, and both men got away among the trees.

The moment it is known a convict has made his escape the big prison bell is rung, all the parties are marched in, and every man is locked in his cell, so that as many officers as possible may go out and join in the search. The forest, which runs the whole way on one side from Parkhurst right down to the seashore, is very dense in parts, and, consequently, if a man has a fair start and

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runs well, he can for a time evade capture. But it is one thing to get out of Parkhurst, and quite another thing to get out of the Isle of Wight. As soon as it is known that a prisoner is at large, word is sent by telephone to all the coastguard stations, and all the men there are sharply on the *qui vive*; a reward up to £5 is payable to anyone not a prison officer who captures an escaped convict. On this occasion the runaways pushed through the forest in the direction of the sea until they came out close to a coastguard station. They certainly had the maddest ideas possible. I suppose it was the sailor who decided what line they should take, for their plan was to wait until dark and then steal out and seize a boat, in the hope of being able somehow or other to get over to France. What they expected to do when they got there I am quite at a loss to explain. They were in their convict clothes, minus their jackets and vests, as they were working in their shirt-sleeves when they bolted, and they had not a penny—I cannot say in their pockets, as pockets are things not allowed to convicts, except one in their jacket to hold their handkerchief. If they had by some rare chance been able to row or sail across the Channel, their appearance would have

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betrayed them directly they landed, and the nearest gendarme would have taken them in charge.

However, perhaps they had never looked as far ahead as that. Seeing the coastguard station, they hid themselves in some bushes, but soon afterwards they became aware of a coastguard walking up and down not far from where they were crouching. It was now late in the evening, and as the last food they had had was dinner between eleven and twelve, they were extremely hungry and thirsty. A prison dinner is not quite the sort of meal to sustain a man for six or seven hours running, especially with little or no prospect of getting anything else for an indefinite time. Something more solid is required to keep up courage and hope and inspire practical designs for the future. They therefore determined to take the coastguard into their confidence, with some vague notion that he might help them to food and drink and, when night came, let them swim off to a sailing boat that was anchored a little way out—a precious likely thing for a coastguard to do ! One of them therefore strolled up to the man, and, having told him their story, asked whether he would get them something to eat. The coastguard, not being quite so simple

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as they imagined, pretended to sympathize with them and to fall in with their plans, telling them to lie quiet where they were while he went back to fetch them some food and liquor. On arriving at the station he was informed of the escape of two convicts from Parkhurst, which he was already aware of, having just made their personal acquaintance. He set off and got one of the forest-keepers, who had his gun with him, and the two went back to the spot where the men were hiding. They told them they must come to the coast-guard station, and if they attempted to run away the keeper would shoot them, so they went quietly. When the coastguards had got them safe inside the station they treated them very kindly and gave them a good supper. After that they hired a farm cart from someone near by, and placing the runaways in it, escorted by the keeper with his gun and a coastguard or two, commenced their journey back to Parkhurst, the distance being about eight miles by road. It was close on midnight when they arrived, and the crest-fallen clergyman and sailor promptly found themselves locked up in the punishment cells.

In the meantime every available warder and several soldiers and civilians were searching the

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forest in all directions, and it was some time before it was generally known that the men had been recaptured. Several of the officers did not get back to the prison until between five and six o'clock in the morning, having been ransacking the forest ever since the previous afternoon. If the runaways did nothing else, they certainly created a sensation and gave the prison staff a little wholesome exercise. Whether the game was worth the candle from their own point of view is another question. They were tried by Visiting Magistrates at their next visit and sentenced to several days in the punishment cells on punishment diet, the loss of a large number of remission marks, and the yellow parti-coloured dress and chains, which they had to wear for several weeks. It was found, too, that the clergyman had three or four slugs from the civil guard's carbine in his arms and shoulders, but these were easily extracted, the wounds being only skin-deep.

There were a good many other attempts to escape whilst I was at Parkhurst, but, as a rule, the men were captured immediately. On one occasion, however, shortly before I went there, a man got away and was not caught for two days.

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Also, on another occasion, a man escaped in the night, having moved some of the bricks in the wall of his cell and made a hole large enough to crawl through. This must have taken him weeks, if not months, to accomplish, because he had no tool but a piece of iron not much bigger than a toothpick, and every morning he had to replace the bricks and cover up the traces of his work with a sort of mortar or paste made from his bread. When he had made an opening that he could get his body through he let himself down by the aid of his sheets to the pavement below, and then managed somehow or other to scale the outer wall. Once free, he easily broke into the house of a clergyman between Parkhurst and Cowes, and helped himself to a fit-out of clothes and some money. He then went on to Cowes, where he got hold of a boat and pushed off. By that time, however, his escape had been made known far and wide, and every boat and every person was being watched, so that he was very soon captured. It is possible that, if he could have concealed himself for a day or two, he might have got away altogether, as he not only had ordinary clothes, but a good supply of money.

I do not think there has ever been a single case



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of a prisoner finally making good his escape from Parkhurst. It was, I think, in that well-known novel called 'The Silence of Dean Maitland' that a vivid description of the escape of a convict from Portland is given—an innocent man who had been condemned by the treachery of a friend, who was the real culprit. He got clear away by the assistance of a Highland sentry whom he took into his confidence, just as the clergyman and sailor from Parkhurst took the coastguard into theirs. If I am not mistaken, the author vouches for the truth of the incident; but, for my own part, I doubt very much whether such a thing ever happened except in a work of fiction or on the stage. There is no reason why a coastguard or a soldier should risk his own liberty to help a convict to escape whom he has never seen before, and who, for all he knows, may be a most dangerous villain of some sort. The only chance an escaped prisoner has is to get a change of clothes and plenty of money within the first hour or two, and even then he is surrounded by dangers known and unknown, and the odds are fifty to one that he will betray himself directly he begins to mix with people or to move about.

If there is one thing about the English prison

## ‘ All Sorts and Conditions of Men ’

system which scarcely admits of any improvement it is the security it affords against convicted criminals roaming at large. It is true that two men escaped from Borstal last year, one of whom was almost immediately captured, while the other succeeded in eluding the police for several months. Unless my memory is at fault, he actually got employment at Woolwich Dockyard, but was eventually retaken the first time he ventured to visit his father's house.

Though the following story has nothing to do with my actual life in prison, it seems to me amusing enough to be worth telling. Since I regained my freedom I have, as might perhaps be expected, received a good many letters from men who claimed to have been at Parkhurst with me. Most of these letters I took no notice of, but some I answered, and I have been to see certain of the writers. One of the latter was a man who was admitted into the infirmary several times whilst I was an orderly there, and to whom I took rather a liking. After a long journey by omnibus and tram I found the place where he lived, and we had a talk about his affairs. He then said his mother would very much like me to have some tea with them, so he took me into a

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room where there were four or five other people—his mother and sister, or sister-in-law (I forget which), and two other men. The mother was very smart in a black silk dress, and wore innumerable rings—such as they were—on most of her fingers, and several gold chains festooned over her very ample bosom. When we had seated ourselves round the table she suddenly turned to me and said, with a sweep of the hand that included the whole company : ‘You need not be at all shy, sir ; we have all “done time” !’ the good lady thinking, no doubt, to put me at my ease and make me feel that we were all equal, and that no one present could look down on any of the others. But it was so comical that I could hardly keep myself from laughing.

## CHAPTER XV

### PRISONERS AND THE PRESS

IN more than one of the early chapters of this book I showed that, both before and after my trial, I met with treatment from several of the leading London newspapers which was by no means in accordance with the boasted character of English journalism for impartiality and fair play. For no other reason than because I belonged to a certain social rank, I was singled out for attack and denunciation, and made the subject of lengthy leading articles and virulent paragraphs, which were evidently intended in the first place to prejudice the Court against me, which they most effectually did, and afterwards to inflame public opinion against me, so that I should never be able to hold my head up again. As if this were not enough for a man who had received the maximum penalty for an offence which had not really injured anybody, some of these same newspapers must needs follow me into prison, and rake up my case

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again whilst I was actually undergoing punishment, mentioning me by name in full, as if the fact that, notwithstanding my former social rank, I was then herded with the worst of criminals, was one to be gloated over. The articles to which I particularly refer appeared in the *Times* and the *Standard* of October 18, 1899, a year and a half after my conviction, and professed to be special descriptions of a Church Army service in the chapel at Parkhurst Prison. As a fact, though evidently the work of trained reporters, who ought to have known better, they were in parts most inaccurate, in addition to being unwarrantably personal, for the sake of sensational effect. The writer in the *Standard* did not hesitate to say that he had seen in the chapel at Parkhurst persons and things that were not there during his visit, or at any other time. Here is an extract verbatim, names only being omitted, which is a marked instance of his misleading and malicious method :

‘There are over eighty murderers within its walls, as well as men who have held good positions in life, such as J—— B——, L—— W—— N——, M——, and V—— H——.’

Now, the sole object of this paragraph obviously was to drag these four names into promi-

## Prisoners and the Press

nence, and to give the public the gratifying information that the writer saw their owners among the murderers in the chapel. The truth was that only one of the four, the first-named, could possibly have been there, as the second, myself, being a Catholic, did not attend the Church Army service; the third was ill in the infirmary; and the fourth, being a Jew, went only to the synagogue. Here is another specimen of the same writer's veracity:

'I was surprised to see how many bore on their arms the letters "M.W.," which indicates that they are mentally weak. Some of these were condemned to life imprisonment. Many were plainly very mad indeed.'

The paragraph previously quoted was false by implication, but this one was fiction pure and simple. The writer never saw any prisoners bearing the letters 'M.W.' on their arms. He referred, no doubt, to those whom I have fully described under the heading of 'balmies,' and who are officially known as 'W.M.'s,' or weak-minded. But none of these have any distinguishing mark on their clothes.

It may be thought, perhaps, that I have made too much of this because it affected myself. I

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admit I feel strongly about it, and I wish to say that I think papers like the *Times* and the *Standard* ought to be above such tactics. But I am not anxious to urge my own opinion. I will be content to cite a much weightier authority. Sir Wemyss Reid, writing in one of his monthly articles called 'The Newspapers' in the *Nineteenth Century*, under date October 18, 1899, expressed himself thus:

'A feature in to-day's journalism to which one may take exception is to be found in an account of certain religious services recently held in Parkhurst Convict Prison. It is all very well to tell us what is being done for the spiritual welfare of the prisoners, but it was surely unnecessary to make special mention of the names of certain of those prisoners whose only claim to the interest of the public lies in the fact that they are members of well-known families. No doubt the error was committed in thoughtlessness, but it is an example of the kind of cruelty of which our press is at times guilty.'

I will not add one word to that grave and measured condemnation on the part of one who commands the respect of every decent journalist.

I come now to a different class of journalism to

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that represented by articles in the *Times* and *Standard*. I know nothing about journalism myself, though I read the newspapers and magazines industriously, and admire them very much. I hope, therefore, that the following remarks will be taken as the impressions of an outsider who, nevertheless, has considerable knowledge of the world, and is able to form a fairly accurate judgment of what is correctly and conscientiously written and what is not. There have appeared from time to time in *Pearson's Magazine* articles by a Mr. George Griffith, who claims to 'have been privileged to examine the inmost working of our convict system,' and, what is more important, to have had the direct guarantee of the late Governor of Parkhurst, Colonel P——, and His Majesty's Prison Commissioners, for the 'absolute accuracy of his statements.' In spite of these very bold assertions, I will undertake to prove that Mr. Griffith can have known little or nothing about the convict system beyond what it suited the officers to let him see as a casual visitor, and, moreover, that some of his statements are so absurd that nobody would be more astounded by them than the late Governor of Parkhurst or the Prison Commissioners. I will take first an article



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called 'Sidelights on Convict Life,' which appeared in *Pearson's* for June, 1899. The illustrations were excellent, though I must say I think it is very wrong that photographers should be allowed to take snapshots of the prisoners for publication. But it is to the letter-press that I take the most serious exception. I do not hesitate to say that the representation which it gives of Parkhurst is positively farcical. What Mr. Griffith expected to find in a prison specially set apart for invalid and weak-minded prisoners I do not know. But from beginning to end of his inspection he seems to have been not only overwhelmed with astonishment, but highly scandalized and indignant at the cleanliness and good order of the place, and the healthy looks of some of the inmates. He evidently went there in the hope of seeing the prisoners kept in dungeons, with no regular food or decent clothing, and forced to perform excessive labour under terror of the lash and other tortures. As he saw none of these things, everything he did see was to his eyes ridiculously and unjustifiably luxurious, and he forthwith conjured up in his mind a spectacle of pampered indolence and self-indulgence which has no existence in fact, but which he turned to account as a

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contrast with the condition of the honest poor outside. To a writer who set out with his mental vision warped like that, nothing appeared in a natural or reasonable light. The approach to the prison he described truly as 'a beautiful avenue of overarching trees, which at first sight might be the approach to some lordly domain, for on both sides are pleasant well-wooded gardens, with pretty houses nestling among the trees and flower-beds.' These, I need hardly say, are the residences of the Governor, Deputy-Governor, chaplain, medical officer, and head officers; but no doubt Mr. Griffith jumped to the conclusion that they were villas set apart for the delectation of pet convicts. What shocked him still more was the laziness of the prisoners:

'In the avenue itself were a couple of irregular lines of convicts gently—very gently—brushing the roadway with long besoms, now and then moving a few dead leaves towards the ditches, and now and then stopping to rest. There is, in fact, a *great deal of resting* done at Parkhurst.'

If it had occurred to him to ask who these men were, he would have learnt that they were hospital patients, allowed to do a little light work for air and exercise, in preference to being shut up all

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day in their cells ; or else one of the light labour parties, composed often of old and decrepit men. Mr. Griffith, of course, took these poor feeble wretches for a hard-labour gang. Equally ludicrous was his misconception of much that he saw inside. This is how he recorded his first impressions of prisoners at work :

‘The surroundings were such as a millionaire might have chosen to build his pleasure-house amidst. Whichever way you looked there were lawns and flowers and trees, and the air was soft and sweet and warm. Most of the prisoners looked plump and comfortable, and perfectly contented with the pleasant lines in which their evil lot had been cast.

‘The majority were pursuing the usual avocations you find going on inside prisons—brick-laying, carpentering, stone-dressing, and so on. But many others were just wandering, *apparently in perfect freedom*, about the paths between the lawns and flower-beds. Some of them were limping painfully, others walking feebly, and every now and then sitting down on chairs placed handily for them, and in front of one of the big red-brick buildings about a dozen were pacing somewhat drearily round and round a grass plot

## Prisoners and the Press

that had a flower-bed in the middle of it. All about this circle and along the walls of the building there were chairs and seats, and whenever a man felt a little tired he was at liberty to drop out and sit down. Some of them weren't doing any walking at all ; they were just lolling about on the chairs and benches sunning themselves.'

In what part or parts of the prison this brilliant romancer witnessed such a scene it is not hard to guess. It was, though he carefully omits to say so, just outside the infirmary, and the men that he saw sitting down or lolling about in the chairs and benches were the hospital patients, many of them suffering from incurable diseases, and the remainder recovering from severe illnesses. Or he may have seen the certified lunatics, who, as I have explained in a separate chapter on the subject, were placed by themselves in the new wing, and allowed to spend part of the day in the garden attached to it, either walking about or sitting on benches, under the charge of their own special officers. Not a single prisoner was ever allowed to sit down when at labour out of doors, unless his work required him to be in that position ; nor is it possible that Mr. Griffith ever saw ordinary convicts of any class at Parkhurst otherwise than

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under close supervision and the strictest discipline. Such a misrepresentation of well-known facts as I have quoted above is nothing short of a gross libel on all who were responsible for the management of the prison; and to say that the Governor and the Prison Commissioners authorized it to be published is adding insult to injury with a vengeance.

But the same muddle-headed confusion of mind and the same habit of reckless generalization runs all through the article. From the account Mr. Griffith gave of the food at Parkhurst it would naturally be supposed that the prisoners are not only grossly overfed, but are supplied with dainties of exquisite quality, such as no working men and few middle-class folk outside ever have a chance of tasting. A reference to my chapter on diet, where the actual facts are stated, will show that this is flagrantly untrue. At the time of Mr. Griffith's visit the old or unreformed scale of dietary was still in force—the dietary which the Departmental Committee of 1898 reported to be insufficient, unwholesome, and not such as 'to maintain the prisoner's general health and bodily condition, so that on discharge he might be capable of taking up any honest means of

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livelihood.' It was, in fact, in some cases barely enough to keep body and soul together, and, as the Committee affirmed, it was so monotonous and so lacking in some of the necessary ingredients of human food that an immediate change was recommended on medical grounds. Yet it was of this same dietary that Mr. Griffith wrote :

'The quantities are all liberal, and the food is always fresh and good and wholesome.' For telling that monstrous fib I should like to set him down to a Sunday dinner, consisting of a pint of pork soup, so putrid that it had to be drenched with vinegar to keep the stench down, or a Thursday dinner, consisting of a pound of rotten potatoes and a pound of suet pudding, 'deficient in the element of fat,' as the Committee emphatically noted. But it is the hospital diet that most especially raised his ire. He gave the particulars of one of the dinners thus : 'Ten ounces of meat, four ounces of bread, eight ounces of potatoes, and four ounces of vegetables'—rather more than a pound and a half of food altogether—and on this he sarcastically remarked: 'One would think a man would have to be a fairly healthy invalid to get through that !'

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Mr. Griffith evidently has not the slightest idea of what 'ounces' of food signify. Ten ounces of meat are just an ordinary good plateful or 'helping'; four ounces of bread are a piece about two inches square—to be accurate, the sixteenth part of a quartern loaf; and eight ounces of potatoes are two fair-sized potatoes. A dinner of these proportions surely cannot be called bloated excess for a man who is being fed up on recovering from illness. But Mr. Griffith thought it a fraud on the taxpayers and a clear inducement to crime that such 'exaggerated humanity' should be wasted on 'a sick thief, or forger, or manslaughterer.' That convicts have a *right* to the amount of food prescribed to them by law struck him as something wonderful.

'It is interesting here, also, to note how scrupulously exact the Government is in its dealings with its involuntary guests. Every prisoner has the right of objection if he suspects that he is being done out of the fraction of an ounce of food. Going through the exquisitely appointed bakery at Parkhurst, and looking over the trays of neat little brown wholemeal loaves, I noticed that some of the loaves had little cubes of bread skewered on to them. This meant

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that they had been weighed, and found wanting of the rigid standard. There is many an old "lag" who can hold his loaf on his fingers and tell you to the fraction of an ounce how much it is over or under weight, and when it is under they don't forget to speak.'

He seems not to have been aware that bread is always sold by weight, and that the prison baker, when he adds the 'jockey' to a loaf that is under the proper weight, only does what every baker in the kingdom is required to do on pain of fine or imprisonment. Considering that the bread is all the solid food that most prisoners get for thirteen or fourteen hours at a stretch, they may well look out sharply for the full allowance. Again, as for the 'neat little brown wholemeal loaves' which Mr. Griffith was so surprised to see in 'the exquisitely appointed bakery at Parkhurst,' their brown colour, unfortunately, was due to what the Departmental Committee called 'an excess of coarse bran and other defects,' resulting from faulty milling arrangements and ignorance of the proper composition of flour. The quality, moreover, was sometimes for months together so bad that only very hungry men could eat all their bread, and not even they could digest it. The



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lengthy passage in which the Committee commented on this subject was the severest in the whole of their able report. One of the silliest things in Mr. Griffith's article was the conclusion he came to—that the prisoners at Parkhurst must have had far more food than was necessary, because of the large quantity of 'leavings' which are given to the pigs. In my chapter on dietary I have given the very simple explanation of these 'leavings.' Sometimes nearly every man in a ward returned his dinner, not because he did not want it, but because it was uneatable.

Scarcely a page of the article is free from blunders or misstatements, some of them of no importance, but others very serious. Commenting on the moral and religious care that is taken of the prisoners, Mr. Griffith wrote: 'Every Sunday two full services are held, as well as special services in the infirmary. There are also a Roman Catholic chapel and a Jewish synagogue within the precincts.' This alone is enough to prove how unobservant he was in collecting his facts. There was no Catholic chapel at Parkhurst, the Church of England chapel being used for both services, a most inconvenient arrangement. Then he went on :

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‘Both the patients and the other prisoners are visited as frequently as possible by the chaplain and his staff, and in addition to all this there are evening classes held for the benefit of the more uneducated.’

By ‘evening classes’ I suppose he meant the scanty lessons in the three R’s that were given for half an hour twice a week after supper.

Similarly, he described the library as ‘an excellent one, containing standard works of biography, travel, history, literature, and general science, which to the better class of prisoners, at any rate, are a very great boon.’

In reality, it consisted at that time principally of a number of tattered old books, mostly ancient novels, which ‘the better class of prisoners’ never used. It was not until long after Mr. Griffith’s visit that the library was much improved by Mr. Addison, who himself told me that when he arrived at Parkhurst as chaplain in August, 1898, it was in a most deplorable condition. It was he who supported me and others so strongly in our request to be allowed to have books sent in to us and so help to replenish and bring it up to date—a practice which was afterwards stopped. These are instances of Mr. Griffith’s errors of

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carelessness, all showing how little he could be relied upon, even in small matters, about which he might easily have ascertained the truth. I shall reserve what I have to say about his graver mis-statements for another chapter.

## XVI

### MORE PRESS INACCURACIES

A MUCH more objectionable article than that of June, 1899, whilst equally foolish in point of inaccuracy, appeared in *Pearson's Magazine* of January, 1902, from the same pen, under the title 'Prison as Home and Shelter.' In both these articles Mr. Griffith set himself to impress the public with the belief that, for the vast majority of offenders, penal servitude is no punishment at all, but is, on the contrary, a very easy and pleasant existence, infinitely preferable to that of the honest working man outside. To do this he adopted the simple method of falsifying the facts in both directions, depicting the lot of the convict in hues so rosy as to be quite unreal, and, on the other hand, painting that of the free labourer in the darkest colours. The passage in the January article in which he summed up his conclusions on this point is so

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unblushingly disingenuous that it may be worth while to give it in full :

‘Take, for instance, the case of the honest man out of work, and contrast his lot with that of the thief, the housebreaker, the coiner, or the swindler in prison. The honest man is perpetually haunted by the fear that each scanty meal may be the last he will ever eat outside the workhouse—which is infinitely more dreaded than the prison. His rent is in arrears, and the spectre of the bailiff dogs his footsteps. Nineteen out of every twenty of his fellow-creatures look upon him with contempt, pitying or otherwise, and until he gets work or goes into “the house” earth has no place for him.

‘But let this man cross the borders of crime, and, when the first shock of the sentence and the swift change which follows it are over, he finds himself in a new world. The scanty clothing, through which wind and rain reached his skin, the broken boots which let the water in at every step on a wet day, are at once exchanged for clean, comfortable garments, warm stockings, and good boots. He has a nice little bed-sitting-room to himself, which, by the King’s regulations, must always be kept at a proper temperature, instead

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of, perhaps, a bunk in a filthy and vermin-haunted doss-house.

‘His food is brought to him at certain hours with unfailing regularity. His working day is very short, rarely more than seven and a half hours, in place of the sixteen and eighteen hours a day through which the honest victim of the sweater or the miser has to toil to earn less food in a day than a thief gets in a single meal. As an honest man he might die in a hovel of consumption complicated by starvation. As a criminal he would be carefully nursed in hospital and sent to Parkhurst to get better on diet, whose generosity would be limited only by the discretion of the medical officer.

‘In short, as an honest and free man he would suffer cold, hunger, the unearned but very real disgrace of poverty, and the ever-haunting fear for the things of to-morrow. But the instant that he became a convicted thief all these cares would vanish, and he could settle down for a given term of months or years to a comfortable, if somewhat monotonous, existence, with no cares, no anxieties, and certainly no hardships that would bear comparison with his sufferings outside.’

Could exaggeration go farther, or could there

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be a more distorted account of the British workman's condition of life? 'The honest man out of work,' it will be noticed, nevertheless 'has to toil sixteen and eighteen hours a day,' while the same respectable householder, whose rent is in arrear, and who is in dread of the bailiff, inhabits 'a bunk in a filthy and vermin-haunted doss-house.' Such inconsistencies would be laughable if they were not discreditable in a writer professing to have made 'a somewhat exhaustive study of the question, pursued under the most favourable circumstances.' The plain truth is, he knows little or nothing either of the life of the honest working classes or of the life of convicts.

That there are in every prison a certain number of hardened convicts who prefer a degraded, body-and-soul-killing slavery to freedom with social responsibilities is a well-known fact, and need cause no surprise. But Mr. Griffith's deliberate assertion that these constitute all but 'about three per cent. of the criminal population of this country,' and that it is only those three per cent. to whom penal servitude is either a punishment or a deterrent, is so outrageous that it is a wonder the editor of a reputable publication like *Pearson's* allowed it to pass. Fortunately, the article is so self-con-

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tradictory that it carries its own refutation with it. On the very same page where the statement just quoted occurs, there will also be found the following passage :

‘There is, both in penal servitude and in hard labour, a very real and a very severe punishment, but it only falls upon the class which, in one sense, least deserves it. This is the degradation from the status of the freeman to that of the numbered human machine ; the sudden severance from all that makes the world a pleasant place to live in, or life itself worth living. It is the transition from the club, the drawing-room, the theatre, and the familiar place of business to the prison-cell, the treadmill, the stone-quarry, and the dismal exercise-ground.

‘A man who had once occupied the position of a gentleman, and who, for a certain offence, was sentenced to ten years’ penal servitude, told me that he spent the first three months of his imprisonment trying to realize what had happened to him. In such a case—and there are many such—the mental torture must be quite unspeakable, and the punishment, especially at first, terribly severe.’

Yet on another page in the same article Mr.



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Griffith declares that 'your gentleman swindler is usually a very "good prisoner."' He may be the greatest scoundrel unhung, but if he has sufficient cunning and self-control he can easily make himself a perfect prisoner. As such, he will earn all the comforts of prison life, which are far greater and more numerous than is generally supposed.'

He then went on to show that prisoners of this class—that is to say, the three per cent. to whom elsewhere he said penal servitude must be 'unspeakable torture' and 'a terribly severe punishment'—do not care a straw about it as a punishment, but thoroughly enjoy the life and wish for nothing better!

This brings me to a paragraph in the article which brands the writer, once for all, as one who has totally forfeited all claim to accuracy. It is as follows:

'For instance, one of the most perfectly behaved prisoners at present in durance vile in England is J—— B——, now at Parkhurst, the convict convalescent home. Another was the gentleman who tried to break the bank at Monte Carlo, and whom I saw trimming stones in Portland Prison. The Governor told me that he had never had a more

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perfectly conducted prisoner through his hands in the whole course of his experience.

‘The last time I saw B—— he was making bags for the post-office. As we passed his bench he looked up, and smiled a smile of the most perfect contentment. Another prisoner, a titled one, whose case caused a considerable sensation in the upper ranks of society some time ago, and who was sharing the same pleasant conditions in the same salubrious retreat, frankly described himself as being happier and more comfortable than he ever had been in his life.’

The last-mentioned prisoner cannot, from the circumstances, have been anyone but myself, and I feel bound to say that Mr. Griffith’s allegation is devoid of all foundation. I never saw him, to my knowledge, in my life, and I do not believe for a moment that he ever saw me, except, perhaps, in the sense that he may have seen me with my party at a distance when working. What he implied is that the Governor took him round and allowed him to identify and to have a chat with particular prisoners, including myself, in order to give a spice to his article in *Pearson’s*—an article, be it observed, which he affirmed was revised and approved by the Governor and the Prison Com-

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missioners. This in spite of his own statement elsewhere, when referring to another man, whom he said he saw at Parkhurst, and who had formerly been in his employment, that 'Any recognition or identification of prisoners is, of course, absolutely forbidden, and very properly so; hence I had to pass by on the other side without giving any sign that I knew him.'

It stands to reason that he was not allowed to speak to a single prisoner. As for my having 'described myself as being happier and more comfortable than I ever had been in my life,' the assertion is on the face of it untrue. It is common knowledge that I was, as the saying is, 'born with a silver spoon in my mouth,' and, until my downfall, I had had every advantage that a young man of my position could have. The only really happy time I had when I was in prison for those three years and nine months was when I was asleep and dreaming of being free. Yet Mr. Griffith, whom I never spoke to, gave the reader to infer that he had an interview with me in prison, and that I had 'frankly described myself as being happier and more comfortable there than I had ever been in my life.' I am sure that if ever I had said such a thing the doctors at Park-

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hurst would have placed me under medical observation, under the belief that I was qualifying for a 'balmy.'

I have dwelt on this with some warmth, not only because it has aroused in me what I consider righteous anger, but because it was used by the writer as an argument in favour of increasing the severity of the punishment of all persons condemned to penal servitude, and actually of repealing some of the wisest and most humane reforms of the prison system that have been instituted within the last century. Mr. Griffith openly advocates that nothing whatsoever should be done to relieve the lot of prisoners, or to encourage them in good conduct, or reward them for it, or to give them a fresh chance when they come out. Lest my readers should refuse to believe that any writer on such a serious and important subject could be so clearly inaccurate, I give the author's own words:

'The tendency of present-day sentiment—sentimentality would, perhaps, be the better word—is all in the direction of leniency towards those who deserve least of their fellow-men. This fact is particularly emphasized by the new regulations, which came into force on May, 1899.

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‘Prior to that date one of the most distasteful features of prison life, from the prisoner’s point of view, was the enforced silence, the absence of all communication between mind and mind, and from what has been told me by those who have undergone this discipline I have every reason to believe that this was a very real punishment.

‘This has been very much modified by these regulations. After a prisoner has served six months of his term he may now be permitted to converse during certain hours of the day with his fellow-prisoners, at the discretion of the Governor, who has the power of withholding the privilege on sufficient grounds, and who may also choose the companions with whom certain prisoners shall be allowed to associate.

‘The effect of this relaxation of discipline has so far not been encouraging. Many prisoners of the better class distinctly object to it—for obvious reasons—and only the worst avail themselves of it when permitted to do so. Your average criminal both suspects and hates his fellow-criminal, and only talks to him for purposes of present or future conspiracy.’

‘Then, again, there is the question of remission of sentence. Before the new regulations

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came into force a prisoner sentenced to a given term of hard labour had to serve his sentence out to the last minute. It is now possible for him to obtain a remission of one-fourth of his sentence. In other words, two years' hard labour now means to a thoroughly well-conducted prisoner only eighteen months. Moreover, when such a prisoner is discharged, the Governor of the prison in which he has served his sentence is bound to give him a certificate to the effect that he has gained this remission by good conduct.'

Of course, these passages, like much else Mr. Griffith has written, teem with inaccuracies and self-contradictions. In one paragraph it is stated that 'enforced silence' was 'one of the most distasteful features of prison life,' and was 'a very real punishment.' In the next paragraph but one, exactly the opposite is stated—namely, that prisoners hate talking, and none but the worst avail themselves of the relaxation of the silence rule. How anybody could write such things is almost inconceivable. The silence rule was relaxed because the authorities had satisfied themselves that the privilege of talking was a high incentive to good conduct, and in many cases the only outlet from despair or madness. It is the

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best prisoners, not the worst, who most gladly avail themselves of it; and the fact that, if allowed indiscriminately, it might be abused by 'fences' and other dangerous characters, is no reason whatsoever for cancelling a regulation which is in truth a very great boon to almost all the men who are entitled to it. Mr. Griffith, I need hardly say, was again inaccurate as to what the regulation is. He said: 'After a prisoner has served six months of his term he may now be permitted to converse during certain hours of the day'—implying every day. In reality, as far as convict prisons are concerned, a prisoner must serve three years with good conduct before he is allowed to talk, and then he is only allowed to talk during exercise on Sunday afternoon. In local prisons, also, talking is only allowed one day a week during exercise.

As to remission of part of the prisoner's sentence to be earned by good conduct, it is no sentimental measure of leniency introduced by the new regulations of 1899. It was established in convict prisons many years ago, and was found to be so effective towards good conduct, that it was extended in 1899 to local prisons for those undergoing the longer sentences.

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I have now done with Mr. Griffith, and I should not have paid so much attention to anything that he wrote had not some of the subjects on which he was most erroneous been of great importance. I propose to deal with these particular subjects in a separate chapter, where I shall quote the highest official authorities upon them.



## XVII

### TALKING AND WALKING

THERE is scarcely any subject connected with the prison system on which those who ought to be authorities differ more than they do on the privilege of conversation at exercise. This is strikingly apparent in the reports of Governors appended to the report of the Commissioners for the year ended March 31, 1901, when the rule had been in force about a year. Many of the Governors did not think the matter of sufficient importance to make any remark on it at all, whilst others attached great importance to it, whether they were in favour of it or the reverse. The Governor of Birmingham Prison wrote :

‘It is seldom that prisoners avail themselves of the privilege of conversing at exercise ; they prefer mostly to keep to themselves, and see no advantage in being too closely associated in prison.’

The Governor of Bristol Prison reported quite differently :

‘The privilege of one talking exercise per week

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has this year been more fully taken advantage of than during the preceding year. I am of opinion, however, that it is not a desirable arrangement, as it gives prisoners opportunities of scheming to give officers trouble.'

The Governor of Canterbury Prison wrote :

'Conversation at exercise has been carried out in accordance with the rule. It has been necessarily much restricted, as the majority of those who have become eligible for it have, in my opinion, been unsuitable ; also there are still those who do not wish to be associated with others.'

The Governor of Cardiff Prison was more decided :

'Conversational exercise has been carried out very rarely ; prisoners do not seem to avail themselves of the privilege, and I do not think myself it is conducive to good discipline.'

The Governor of Chelmsford Prison made the remarkable, and in my opinion quite mistaken, statement that 'Conversation at exercise is only appreciated by the habitual criminal,' while the Governor of Devizes Prison remarked very truly that 'Conversation at exercise is valued by some ; others refuse it altogether.'

The Governor of Dorchester Prison dealt with

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it at some length, and in a decidedly adverse tone :

‘In my report of last year I took the opportunity of saying that conversation at exercise appeared to be fraught with many doubts and difficulties ; a longer experience of its working, and a close observance of its results, has impressed me that it is a retrograde and pernicious step, and one that is conducive to all kinds of moral contagion, undermining, if not entirely destroying, the work of the chaplain and schoolmaster, and the good resolutions which may have been induced by perusal of the healthy literature provided.

‘Quite recently an elderly prisoner at associated exercise was heard by an officer to incite his companion to insubordination by offensive and blasphemous language. It was the merest chance that the conversation was overheard, but I venture to think that this is the usual kind of talking among prisoners, and not the exception.

‘One asks, whatever prisoners, who are generally strangers to each other, and often ignorant men, can have to talk about one with the other. Nothing, probably, but their criminal tactics and their prison grievances—neither, surely, a desirable subject for conversation and debate.’

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The Governor of Exeter Prison made an equally unfavourable, but more discriminating, report :

‘Conversation at exercise, I am of opinion, is most undesirable. Old offenders are usually very well behaved while in the prison ; it is practically impossible to know each prisoner sufficiently to arrange suitable pairs, and much mischief may be done at this conversation, the results of which will not be seen till after the individuals have left the prison. I have not found any ill-effects as far as prison discipline is concerned.’

The Governor of Hereford Prison wrote :

‘Conversation at exercise has been taken advantage of by a few, but I cannot say they derive any benefit from it. This privilege, in my opinion, should only be allowed to first offenders.’

The Governor of Lancaster Prison’s report was rather singular :

‘Talking at exercise was not carried on during the year ; no prisoner applied to do so. Last year’s experience proved this rule to work unsatisfactorily.’

The Governor of Leicester Prison was more emphatic than convincing :

‘Further experience of the rule with regard to conversation at exercise only tends to convince me

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that it is an unmitigated evil, and only the worst class of prisoners desire to avail themselves of it. Shortly after joining here I found that out of five prisoners in the conversation class (third division) two—one with over twenty previous convictions—did not wish to retain the privilege, one of them informing me that the conversation of one member of the class consisted chiefly of the career of crime on which he intended to embark on his release, and another—an old convict—of his experiences in convict prisons.'

The Governor of Lewes Prison took the opposite view :

'No bad results have been observed from conversation at exercise, nor do I apprehend any so long as care is taken to prevent badly-behaved prisoners from being allowed the privilege.'

The Governor of Lincoln Prison, on the other hand, reported thus :

'Having found no desire on the part of well-behaved prisoners, as a rule, for association at exercise, and owing to the danger of the habitual criminal influencing the chance criminal for evil, I have ceased altogether to permit this privilege.'

The Governor of Liverpool Prison was also adverse :

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‘The practice which has been introduced in permitting prisoners to associate together when at exercise I disapprove of.’

The Governor of Newcastle-on-Tyne Prison was more favourable :

‘Conversation at exercise has been carried out, the prisoners giving no trouble, a fair proportion of those entitled to this privilege declining to avail themselves of it.’

The Governor of Northallerton Prison also reported :

‘Conversation at exercise has been tried, and so far satisfactorily. In one case only it had to be withheld, in consequence of the vicious conversation of the prisoner.’

The Governor of Oxford Prison took rather a peculiar view :

‘Very few avail themselves of conversational exercise ; for weeks together none care to go. After two or three periods of conversation they appear to have exhausted all their talking powers, and apply to take their usual exercise. In fact, I don’t think any good comes from it ; they have nothing to converse about unless they should meet with an old pal.

The Governor of Pentonville Prison, a very important one, gave his experience thus :

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‘Talking exercise has been carried on in accordance with the regulations ; occasionally a prisoner prefers to walk by himself, but, as a rule, the privilege has been taken advantage of and appreciated. I cannot call to mind an instance of misconduct occurring at this exercise.’

The Governor of Plymouth Prison merely remarked :

‘Conversation at exercise has largely fallen into desuetude ; applications to converse are rarely made, and then generally by objectionable characters.’

The report of the Governor of Portsmouth Prison was to much the same effect :

‘The regulation as to talking at exercise has not been taken advantage of by many of the prisoners. On being questioned, their invariable answer is they don’t want to be associated with any of the others for fear of getting into trouble.’

The Governor of Preston Prison also wrote :

‘The desire to talk at exercise appears to have died out, for only one prisoner has expressed a wish to do so. Apropos of this, it is interesting to note that only fifty-six prisoners were reported for talking at unauthorized times.’

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The Governor of Reading Prison, on the contrary, reported :

‘The privilege of talking at exercise is much appreciated. They walk and talk in a quiet and orderly manner, and there have been no reports for misbehaviour.’

The Governor of Ruthin Prison had an entirely different account to give :

‘Conversation at exercise has not been carried out generally under the new rule, and it appears to me a very questionable provision. The privilege has not been sought for, but prisoners have asked to be excused, stating they had nothing to talk about, and wished to avoid acquaintances amongst themselves.’

The report of the Governor of Usk Prison was somewhat contradictory :

‘Conversation at exercise has been carried out. It does not appear to be appreciated. One prisoner preferred taking his exercise in the ordinary way, as he objected to his companions’ indecent conversation. Another declined to avail himself of this uncertain privilege, as he considered that no good would result from it.’

The Governor of Wakefield Prison was very decidedly adverse :



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‘ With reference to conversation at exercise, we have from thirty to forty prisoners weekly availing themselves of this privilege, although many will not avail themselves of it. I cannot but consider it an injudicious privilege, and it most certainly gives prisoners every facility for concocting mischief while in prison, and devising robberies and every sort of crime when at liberty.’

The Governor of Wandsworth Prison reported :

‘ Conversation at exercise is highly prized, though during the year forty-three asked to be excused the privilege.’

The Governor of Warwick Prison merely mentioned that :

‘ Only a very few prisoners have been considered eligible for the privilege of talking at exercise.’

The Governor of Winchester Prison wrote quite differently :

‘ No objections have been made to attending conversation exercises, and few have abused the privilege.’

The Governor of Worcester Prison reported :

‘ With few exceptions prisoners have taken advantage of the privilege of conversing at exercise. Granting this privilege is, I believe,

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a retrograde step, and I feel convinced that it should not be extended to habitual criminals.'

The Governor of Wormwood Scrubs Prison was of somewhat the same opinion :

'*Conversation at exercise.*—I am of opinion that this privilege should be confined to "star" class and second division prisoners. I do not think that any good results arise from the general adoption of this principle.'

The Governor of Parkhurst Prison gave his views at greater length than any other, but without bringing forward any good reasons for them. His report was in accord with his invariable habit of mind, which I think is that all prisoners are as bad as bad can be, and that no sort of privilege should be allowed them which can possibly be withheld. Here it is in full :

'As regards the talking at exercise on Sundays, allowed to convicts in the fourth stage and special class, although no direct breaches of discipline have been traced to it, I venture to suggest that its advantages are open to grave doubt.

'If looked upon as a relaxation from the rule of silence, permitted on grounds of health or of humanity, its necessity is not apparent. Were

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convicts kept in solitary, or even in separate, confinement, it would be a different matter ; but as this class of prisoner is in association all day, except at meal-times, the risks of mental harm arising from restrictions on speech may be put on one side. It is the solitude, of which silence is only a subsidiary feature, that is dangerous in the system of imprisonment which obtains in some countries.

‘ From another point, the indulgence may be viewed as a reward for good behaviour. In this regard it is worth while to consider what are the probable topics of conversation between men whose manner of life when at large has landed them in penal servitude, and whether the bringing together of criminals, shortly to be set at liberty, is not likely to develop friendships between members of the very class that it is, in the interests of society, desirable to keep apart. I suggest that it is at least questionable whether a convict’s good conduct in prison should be rewarded by a privilege, involving serious risk of moral harm to himself, and giving opportunity for planning future depredations on the community.

‘ Assuming that the general rule of silence, besides being essential for the maintenance of

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discipline, has been adopted in order to guard against these evils, its practical enforcement is not rendered more easy by official recognition of talking amongst even a limited number of convicts.'

Finally, the Governor of Portland Prison made the following cautious report :

'The rule under which conversation at one exercise on Sunday has been permitted has not led to good results in all cases. More care is now being taken to restrict this privilege to prisoners whose antecedents justify the belief that they will not contaminate others ; so habitual criminals and prisoners who have been convicted of certain offences are now being debarred from this privilege.'

Now, with this bundle of conflicting opinions before them, the Commissioners may well have been puzzled to know what to decide ; but I think it will be admitted that they came to a very reasonable conclusion thus :

'With regard to discipline generally, it will be observed that many Governors take exception to the privilege which is now accorded to selected prisoners undergoing the longer sentences of conversation at exercise on one day in the week.

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We stated last year that when the Prison Act of 1898 was before Parliament the introduction of such a rule was very strongly urged, but that, if we had any reason to believe, after a further observation, that any evil was likely to result, it would be our duty to call the attention of the Secretary of State to the matter. No less than twelve Governors pronounce against the rule as subversive of discipline, while many Governors report that the privilege is not appreciated by prisoners, who in many cases decline to take advantage of it. The statutory rule which grants the privilege is permissive in its character, and only confers the privilege on such long-sentence prisoners as are not deemed unsuitable for it. If, therefore, a discretion be judiciously exercised in the matter of granting the privilege, we do not anticipate that danger is likely to arise either from the point of view of discipline or of moral contamination. We will, however, make it our duty to watch the matter closely.'

This goes to the root of the thing. It is altogether a question of discretion, judiciously or injudiciously exercised, and that is just where Governors differ. A high prison official once said to me very wisely that, as regards much of the

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inner working of a prison, the prisoners themselves and the officers know more than the Governor or Directors ever can. I hope I shall not be thought presumptuous, therefore, if I suggest that on the subject of conversation these official reports of Governors may be of less value than the opinion of one who has been a prisoner. My experience, certainly, was that the privilege of conversation at exercise was highly appreciated, and was not abused by any prisoners except those whom a little discrimination could have excluded from it. Those Governors who supposed that prisoners have nothing to talk about but recollections or future plans of crime show a strange want of knowledge of the people under their charge. That supposition may be correct enough concerning a proportion of habitual criminals, but it is wholly incorrect as applied to all classes of prisoners, and especially the first offenders. It is natural that some should like to talk about their past life, and, personally, I often found such narratives full of information and free from anything offensive or harmful. When this is the case I am sure it is good for the prisoners, by way of mental relief, to be allowed to interchange recollections and ideas. No prisoner is obliged to carry on conversation

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which he dislikes, and I cannot agree with the Governor of Exeter Prison that it is practically impossible to know each prisoner sufficiently to arrange suitable pairs. But why arrange pairs at all? At Parkhurst we used to arrange among ourselves whom we would walk with ; sometimes the same two men would walk together every Sunday, but as a rule most of the men used to change about, and I never remember, among the 'star' class at any rate, any two men being prevented walking together.

Though it is quite possible that among the habitual criminal class the privilege may at times be abused, I feel sure that among the 'star' class it is highly conducive to good behaviour, and should be extended to convicts who have reached the third stage—that is to say, to those who have done two years of their sentence with good conduct. At present men only in the fourth stage and special class are allowed to talk, for though men sentenced to anything over six months are allowed this privilege in local prisons, a convict has to wait for three years before he can get it.

Consequently, a man getting a sentence of three or four years' penal servitude can never benefit by

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it at all, which to me seems anything but just. It would, therefore, be a move in the right direction if it was allowed to men on getting their 'yellow collar'—in other words, reaching the third stage,



## XVIII

### CLASSIFICATION AND REFORMATION

VAST improvements have been made in the penal system within the last fifty years, twenty years, or even ten years, and the good effect which these have had in the diminution of crime affords the greatest possible encouragement to prison reformers to continue their efforts. Those writers and speakers who insist that only harm has been done by what they call 'Humanitarian sentimentalism' in relation to criminals either do not know the facts, or else distort them for their own purposes. They have the excuse, perhaps, that the facts are not easily got at, and are, indeed, only familiar to experts or special students of the subject. I will mention a few striking ones which can be readily understood, and which show in a concise form how great a change for the better, amounting to a veritable revolution, has already been brought about simply by reducing the severity of the criminal law and organizing the prisons on principles of common-sense.

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In the middle of the last century—that is to say, the fifties and early sixties—the average yearly number of persons condemned to penal servitude in England and Wales was 2,800 out of a population, in round figures, of twenty millions.

This meant that more than double the number of convict prisons that there are now were always filled with men, women, and even children, undergoing terrible sentences, in many cases for comparatively trivial offences, while the local gaols were equally crammed with others graduating for convicts. This shameful state of affairs aroused such an outcry that a vigorous movement in favour of humanity and justice was begun by the Howard Association, powerfully aided by such men as John Bright and Lord Shaftesbury.

The result was that in 1864 legislation was carried which has ever since formed the basis of the criminal law and the prison system. It was carried in the teeth of opposition and ridicule which it is very difficult for anyone to realize at the present day. The best way to realize it, perhaps, is to look back to the volumes of *Punch* for that period, and to see how every week the genius of the most brilliant satirists and caricaturists was used to prejudice the public against some of the greatest

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and best of men. John Leech outdid himself in his wonderful pictures of pampered convicts and crack-brained philanthropists. John Tenniel, also, represented the reform leaders in some of his famous cartoons as a set of canting hypocrites ready to turn loose the dregs of the prisons on the respectable classes for the sake of gaining political support. But the movement was too strong to be checked, and events very soon justified it beyond all expectation. The average annual number of persons sent to penal servitude immediately fell from 2,800 in 1864 to 1,978 for the period of five years ending December, 1869; then to 1,633, 1,622, 1,427, 945, 851, 770, until in 1900 it reached the low figure of 748 out of a population increased from 20 millions to over 34 millions. I have taken these particulars from the official report of 1901, where the Commissioners of Prisons draw special attention to 'the great and progressive decrease in the number of sentences for serious crime' since 1864. It is impossible to express in words or figures what that decrease meant in the lessening of human suffering; but something of its effect on the nation can be gathered from the fact that, whereas up to 1864 the number of persons who became convicts each year was thirteen out of

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100,000 of population, the number now is only two. Those two, moreover, get much shorter sentences, on the whole, than the 13 got, and are treated infinitely better whilst in prison. It must not be supposed, of course, that the whole number of persons convicted of crime of any sort has decreased in any such proportion as that. No such result could possibly have been hoped for in the time. But the decrease in the whole number of persons convicted of crime of any sort has been very great—considerably over a third—notwithstanding that the population has increased by more than one half. Here, again, this much smaller number of prisoners are far less severely punished than the larger number used to be, and are afforded better chances of becoming honest people when their punishment is over. To put it very shortly, facts and figures prove beyond dispute that every humane reform of the penal laws and the prison system has made the people less criminal, and so been a safeguard to society instead of a danger.

These reforms have mainly taken place in England, including Wales, both the penal laws and the prison system being still very bad in Scotland and Ireland. The Commissioners in

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their report are careful to point out the result. Whereas in England the total number of persons annually received into prisons per 100,000 of the population is now 571, in Ireland it is 793, and in Scotland 1,402. This is not because crime goes undetected or unpunished in England. The contrary is the case; the detection and punishment of crime are far more certain in England than in Scotland or Ireland. But there is actually less crime because the laws are milder and the treatment of prisoners is more rational. Under the existing law in England a multitude of offences which were formerly punishable by long terms of penal servitude are now punishable only by imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for periods not exceeding two years; and in most cases where penal servitude may be inflicted the Judges have the power to substitute the shorter and lighter punishment of imprisonment.

This is an immense reform, but there are two others equally effective and far-reaching. One is known officially as the 'segregation' of first offenders. The other is the special treatment of young offenders. Up to 1879 no distinction was made between first offenders and habitual criminals, but all were mixed up together, with the natural

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consequence that there soon ceased to be much difference between them, the majority of first offenders becoming more or less habitual criminals through the corrupting influence of their companions. In that year a new system was introduced in convict prisons by which first offenders were placed entirely by themselves, and not allowed to communicate in any way with the 'ordinaries,' or habitual criminals—those, namely, who, having served one term and been discharged, had returned to prison on being again convicted. The result of this very simple step towards classification can best be stated by the following paragraph from the Commissioners' report of 1901 :

'Since the formation of the "star class" in convict prisons in 1879 up to March 31 last, 2,693 male convicts have been placed in it, of whom only 26, or 1·2 per cent. of those discharged, have returned to penal servitude under fresh sentences, and only 26, or 1·2 per cent., have had their licenses revoked or forfeited. Of 119 females, not one has returned to penal servitude.'

Nothing could be much more striking than that ; yet, though the good effects of the new system in convict prisons were very speedily seen, it took eighteen years to overcome the apathy or

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conservatism of the Home Office authorities, so as to get it extended to local prisons. There also the result has been excellent, according to the Commissioners' report :

‘The complete separation of first offenders from the habitual criminals, which commenced in 1897-98 by the establishment of the “star class” system in all local prisons, has been continued during the past year. In the four years in which the system has been in operation 29,195 males and 5,823 females have been placed in the class, of whom 2,076 males, or 7·1 per cent., and 685 females, or 11·7 per cent., have been re-committed to prison under fresh sentences. This will not be deemed a large proportion when it is borne in mind that it includes *all* re-committals—*i.e.*, for very slight offences against social order, in default of payment of a fine, as well as committals for serious crime.’

What these figures show is that the ‘star class’ system is rapidly stopping what may be called the manufacture of criminals by the State—a manufacture which not many years ago was one of the most flourishing industries in the country. Whether it will ever put an end to it altogether remains to be seen ; but, judging from twenty years’ experi-

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ence of the system in the convict prisons, there is reason to believe a time may come when first offenders returning to crime will be very rare exceptions indeed.

The other reform which I have alluded to as tending to nip criminality in the bud—the special treatment of youthful offenders—is still to some extent an experiment, but so far it seems to be working admirably. In former times the enormous number of children sent to gaol was a crying disgrace to a civilized nation. Without going back to the savage old days when mere babies used to be hanged for petty offences, it is shocking enough to learn that only ten years ago over two hundred children under twelve years of age, and over three thousand aged between twelve and sixteen, were annually committed to prison, and were herded with the ordinary criminals. These numbers have now been very greatly reduced, but the evil still exists. Last year twenty children under twelve years old, and 1,364 between twelve and sixteen, were sentenced to longer or shorter terms of imprisonment. Concerning these, the Commissioners quote with approval the opinion expressed by the chaplain of Bristol Prison, deploring the presence of juveniles in prison at all—



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that 'in most cases their crimes are the result of mere childish mischief, and it seems probable that many criminals are in this way manufactured by the law.' To obviate that a special system for children under sixteen has been established at Bedford Prison, where these poor little wretches are kept strictly apart from the older prisoners, and are treated more as if they were at a rather rough and strict school than as if they were undergoing punishment in gaol. The following is the report of the Visiting Committee, embodied by the Commissioners in their report of 1901 :

'As regards juvenile offenders, the Committee cannot commend too highly the careful training they are receiving, both morally and physically, and it is very gratifying to hear of the good result among this class of offenders after their release from prison, which is due to the reforming treatment they are subjected to.'

On the strength of this success at Bedford, it has now been decided to set up a somewhat similar system for prisoners between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, officially known as 'juvenile adults'—a rather clumsy phrase, which, nevertheless, fairly expresses what it means. These numbered last year 12,027, of whom only 5,000 were

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first offenders, while 1,033 went to prison in default of paying a fine. The rest were mostly boys or girls sentenced to short terms of imprisonment for petty crimes, 'the result,' as the Commissioners say, 'not so much of their own natural perversity as of the evil surroundings in which they have lived, and the evil example to which they have been subject from their infancy.' The juvenile adults are now to be collected from the different prisons in London and sent to Borstal, where part of the old building has been reconstructed by convict labour for the special purposes of a penal reformatory. The rules for the conduct of this novel establishment are so full of the spirit of enlightened and practical—as distinguished from mere sentimental—humanity, they ought to be publicly known. As these young prisoners include all descriptions of offenders, they need to be most carefully sorted out. They are, therefore, to be strictly classified according to their character and antecedents, and each class is to be kept apart from the others. These classes, again, are to be divided into three grades : First, penal ; second, ordinary ; and third, special, with particular privileges attached to the third or special grade, and each grade will wear a distinctive dress. All prisoners

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on reception are to be placed in the middle, or ordinary grade, and it will depend on the conduct of each whether he gains promotion to the special grade, or incurs degradation to the penal grade, or remains in the ordinary grade. A more effectual method of encouraging steadiness and industry, or discouraging idleness and misbehaviour, could not well be devised. The prisoners are to be made to work hard, and specially instructed in useful trades and industries which may fit them to earn their livelihood on release, and those who are medically fit are to be drilled every day. They are also to be given a good elementary education, and something beyond in the way of lectures and addresses, and are to be encouraged to improve themselves by reading. No prisoner is to have the right to any remission of sentence, but it may be granted upon special recommendation—a very wise and necessary provision. In all other respects general prison rules are to apply, but special arrangements are to be made for watching over the prisoners welfare after their discharge.

Such is the latest new departure—the most important that has been taken since the formation of the ‘star’ class in 1879. The Commissioners

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admit that it has yet to stand the test of time, but they have no doubt of the momentous character of the change it would effect in the event of success. Their words on this point are so weighty that they should be read in full :

‘It would be rash to anticipate what the result of the Borstal experiment may be, but if it should be such as to justify an alteration of the law in the direction suggested by the Prisons Committee of 1894, we believe that a great step forward will have been taken in dealing with the problem of the treatment of crime, for it is becoming every day more evident that it is by prevention alone—*i.e.*, by concentrating attention and care on those who are young enough to be amenable to good influences—that this great problem can be satisfactorily handled.’

The allusion to the Prisons Committee of 1894 needs explanation. What that Committee suggested was that the courts should have power to commit all offenders under the age of twenty-three to a penal reformatory under Government management for periods of not less than one year or more than three years, ‘with a system of licenses, graduated according to sentences, which should be freely exercised.’ The Commissioners may well call that

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'a great step forward in dealing with the problem of the treatment of crime'; and once more it is eloquent of the slow ways of the Home Office that eight years should have elapsed before they ventured on even trying such a hopeful experiment on a small scale. Only those who study such questions from the inside, however, can have the slightest notion of how red-tape ties the hands of committees, commissioners, inspectors, and others who see what changes are needed, and would gladly proceed with them if they were allowed. Governments, too, are afraid of being, as they say, 'in advance of public opinion,' and so all sorts of injustice and absurdity are allowed to go on year after year, in spite of every effort to draw attention to them and get them remedied. Yet the world moves, and in view of the various improvements recorded above, no one need despair of the prospect of penal reform in the future.

## XIX

### SENTENCES AND REMISSIONS

It may have been noticed that, when explaining the method of treating young offenders proposed by the Prisons Committee of 1894, I gave prominence to their recommendation of a 'system of licenses graduated according to sentences, which should be freely exercised.' This means that the Committee recommend that sentences passed on young offenders should be partially remitted, as a reward for good conduct, on a graduated scale, licenses—the equivalent of tickets-of-leave—being given them for the remainder of their term.

It has often struck me that a system of graduated remissions might be applied with great advantage to all classes of prisoners. It is grossly unfair, for instance, that in the matter of remission first offenders should be treated in exactly the same way as habitual criminals, who, to quote Mr. Justin McCarthy, spend half their lives getting into prison and the other half getting out again.

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Surely a man who is sent to prison for the first time, and whose record up to then was absolutely clear—or who, at all events, has never had anything proved against him before—should receive some consideration other than if he had committed crime after crime, and were morally certain to commit a great many more.

I showed from official figures in the preceding chapter that, since the creation of a separate class for first offenders in convict prisons, in 1879, out of 2,812 prisoners placed in it only twenty-six of those discharged have returned to penal servitude under fresh sentences, and only the same number, curiously enough, have had their licenses revoked or forfeited. This works out at something less than one per cent., and is positive proof that as a rule first offenders after undergoing punishment in a separate class from habitual criminals may be set at liberty with safety to others and themselves. Of habitual criminals, on the contrary, about seventy per cent. return to prison, either under fresh sentences, or to serve out their ticket-of-leave. Does it not stand to reason, therefore, that first offenders, ninety-nine out of a hundred of whom are shown to be harmless to the community, should be enabled to earn a larger remission than those

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who are in and out of prison all their lives? The point I wish to urge is that an essential, and not merely a technical difference exists between first offenders and habitual criminals. It is not only the 'star' and single letter on his arm that distinguishes one man from another man with two or more letters on his arm. It is the fact that he has only committed one offence in his life in a moment of passion, or under pressure which he was not morally strong enough to resist at the time, and that he has not otherwise betrayed any criminal instinct or inclination, of which, indeed, in numberless instances, he is entirely free. The man with several letters, on the other hand, has already gone from crime to crime, and proved himself a natural enemy to society, according to the number and circumstances of his convictions.

Why should these two be treated alike with regard to the length of time they are to be kept under restraint? Something in the nature of a graduated scale should meet the case; for example, instead of, as at present, all prisoners being allowed a remission for good conduct of three months in the year, first offenders might be enabled to earn four months; those sent to penal servitude for the first time, having previously undergone punish-



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ment in a local prison, three months ; those undergoing a second term of penal servitude, two months ; and those who have come back three times or oftener, only one month. This would be both an encouragement to first offenders to go straight, and a deterrent to more hardened offenders from going crooked. At all events, it would protect the community from the latter for a longer time, and save the expense of innumerable prosecutions ; in fact, with some men there is no object gained by giving any remission at all. I have known men earn absolutely the whole of their remission, go out of prison, and at once take to crime again. If they are convicted of a slight offence and have a long ticket to do, they will probably only be sent back to do their ticket—that is, to serve out the full term of their original sentence. But if their fresh crime is a serious one they will get another term, and will also have to do their ticket. As soon as they have done their ticket and completed their sentence they will repeat the same process at the end of it—a process very amusing to them, perhaps, but very costly to the State.

I will give an instance to make my meaning clear : There was at Parkhurst a man named M——,

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who was nearly always in the hospital, as he suffered very badly from gout in the hands. Some of the officers suspected that he himself caused the swelling by a process of 'faking,' but if so, it was skilfully done, and he was passed for hospital by the doctors. He was undergoing when I was there a seven years' sentence of penal servitude, and tacked on to that, when he had completed it, he would have to do a fifteen months' ticket on a previous sentence. In the summer of 1901, as he was nearing the end of the seven years' penal servitude—that is, when he had nearly completed five years and three months of his second sentence—he petitioned the Secretary of State that his ticket of fifteen months on the previous sentence might be remitted. The medical officer, I believe, supported the petition on the ground of the man's bad health, with the result that he was again released on ticket-of-leave—that is to say, he would be on ticket-of-leave for the twenty-one months of his sentence which he had just completed, and for the fifteen months of his first sentence. He went home, I think, in August, and he was back again at Parkhurst in October, having a fresh sentence of five years' penal servitude. Consequently, though nominally in for

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five years, he was practically under sentence for eight years, because he had forfeited the ticket on both his previous sentences—namely, a fifteen months' ticket and a twenty-one months' ticket, which, together with his latest sentence, came to eight years. Yet with good conduct, after doing six years, he will again be able to be free, without having to ask any further favour from the Secretary of State. His conduct is certain to be good, for he will in all probability spend most of his time in the hospital, except for going out, perhaps, now and then with the hospital working party. All his convictions have been for the same offence, and he has never been out of prison for more than a few months between the completion of one sentence and the beginning of another. He is, I should say, perfectly hopeless, and is bound to come back again very soon after his next release, because he belongs to that particular class of men who in many ways are much better off in prison than outside. He was at one time a soldier, and pretended that he had the Victoria Cross. At his last trial, however, it came out that his alleged Victoria Cross was a sham one, though it was on the strength of it that he had been able to commit, I believe, all three crimes.

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There is no reason why he should not commit three more, and he most likely will if he gets the chance.

Now, can it be maintained that there is much sense in such a system of remission as that, or any justice either, when the same measure of mercy precisely is meted out to men who have only once broken the law, and who can be safely relied on not to break it again ?

I may mention another case—that of a man who had once been pretty well-to-do, and whose relations, I believe, are in a good position, though they gave up helping him, as he drifted from bad to worse. This man was far gone in consumption. He was all the time in the infirmary, being physically unfit to do any work at all. He earned his full remission, and in September, 1901, on completing a three years' sentence of penal servitude, he was discharged with the few shillings in his pocket which a prisoner under a three years' sentence is able to get.

After he had been out a few days and spent all his money, feeling frightfully ill, and missing the nourishment and attention he had got accustomed to in prison, he deliberately smashed the window of a jeweller's shop in Regent Street, grabbed a

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handful of watches or whatever came first, and began to run away. Of course, a man in the last stage of consumption cannot run far, and he was speedily caught and got a fresh sentence of penal servitude. He returned to Parkhurst shortly before I left, looking ten years older for want of proper food and medicine, though he had only been away a few weeks. He seemed quite contented to be back again, and I do not suppose there is the slightest probability of his leaving Parkhurst alive, if he is not already dead. But if by good nursing he should linger on for some few years, he will again earn his full remission, and again be discharged with no possible means of living outside except crime or the workhouse. What object can there be in shortening such a man's term by a single day? He is only one of many who, knowing that if they come to prison they will pass all their time in hospital, prefer to commit a crime and get a sentence of penal servitude rather than go to the workhouse. They make a regular practice of doing this, and they look on the few days or weeks when they are out on ticket-of-leave with a little money to spend as a sort of periodical holiday.

In the same way, it is well known, there are

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many women belonging to the habitual criminal class who, when they are expecting to be confined, commit a crime on purpose to get into prison in order that their child may be born there and be taken care of by the doctors and nurses. I heard of one woman who invariably did this when in an interesting condition, timing her arrangements so as to be in prison just long enough to suit her convenience and no longer. At last the authorities became aware of the trick that was being played on them, and the next time she came to prison to carry out her usual programme she was informed, shortly before the confinement was to take place, that the remainder of her sentence had been remitted. She was, therefore, conducted outside the prison gates and went away cursing and swearing furiously at having regained her freedom sooner than she intended. That is the only instance I know of where the remission of the sentence of a hopelessly habitual criminal gained any useful object or was anything but an injury to the community. I have cited instances to the opposite effect, and I hope I have furnished some convincing arguments in favour of a graduated scale of remission.

It stands to reason, however, that no graduated

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scale of remission can serve its purpose, and that the whole system of remission must be to a great extent farcical, so long as the Judges take such extraordinarily different views as they do in passing sentences. Monstrous as it may seem, it is the plain truth that in one part of England a crime is punished by a short term of imprisonment in a local gaol, whilst in another part of England the same crime is punished by a long term of penal servitude. Even in the Courts in London, where some sort of uniformity might surely be arranged, the most astounding inequalities prevail. I will give an example. There were two solicitors at Parkhurst during my time, both of whom had been condemned for almost exactly similar crimes. Each had made away with the property of clients, and each, when detected, had attempted to take his own life and that of his wife. These two men were tried by two different Judges, and one received a sentence of five years' penal servitude, the other a sentence of ten years.

Now, if there was any difference in criminal intent between these men, it was certainly in favour of the one who received the ten years' sentence, because he was clearly off his head when he attempted to kill himself and his wife. This

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is shown by the fact that when first put on trial he was not sentenced, but was ordered to be confined during the Queen's pleasure, and was sent to Broadmoor. After a few months there he was discharged as cured, and was rearrested at the gate and again put on trial. This time he came before Mr. Justice Grantham, who sentenced him to ten years' penal servitude. He then went to Lewes to do his separate confinement, but signs of insanity reappearing, he was again sent to Broadmoor for lunatic treatment, and on partial recovery was transferred to Parkhurst. There can be little doubt the man was scarcely responsible for his actions. Yet he got double the sentence that was passed on a perfectly sane man for an exactly similar crime.

Here is a still more bewildering instance of judicial caprice as regards sentences. Two men were brought before Mr. Justice Phillimore to be tried for bigamy. There was nothing remarkable in either case, both being just about equal in point of criminality. But one man had gone through the form of re-marriage in church, and the other at a registrar's office. On account of this difference alone the former was sentenced to five years' penal servitude, while the latter was let off without



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any punishment at all, being merely ordered to be detained during the sitting of the Court. Mr. Justice Phillimore made no disguise of his bias in this case. He openly avowed that, being a strict Churchman himself, he did not consider a form of re-marriage before a registrar was any breach of the laws of God, and he therefore imposed only a nominal penalty. In the other case the crime had been committed in a church, and that was a breach both of the laws of God and of man, and must be punished with the utmost severity. What sort of equality can there be before the law when Judges have the power to exercise their discretion—or, rather, their personal prejudice—in such a fashion as that ?

I remember many years ago meeting a lady at a dinner-party whose house a man had attempted to rob shortly before. The burglar was found concealed in her bedroom, but managed to escape for the time. Eventually he was caught, and on its being proved at his trial that he was a bad character, the late Recorder of London, Sir Charles Hall, sentenced him to eighteen months' hard labour. Sir Charles happened to be at the same dinner-party I have spoken of, and the lady whose house had been attempted made a violent

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attack upon him for having given the man such a short sentence. Sir Charles replied :

‘ If you only knew what eighteen months’ imprisonment means you would not think that a very short sentence or a very light punishment.’

At the time when I was at Holloway three men were there waiting trial who had been bank directors, and they were eventually tried by Sir Charles Hall for conspiracy to defraud. They had taken some £30,000 from a bank in Wales some years previously, but one of them, fearing the consequences, or, perhaps, suffering from pangs of conscience, had paid back his share of the plunder. What was their fate? The prime mover in the crime, the managing director, who for years had been falsifying the books, received a five years’ sentence ; one of the directors, who had been led into the fraud and enjoyed the proceeds, got eighteen months’ imprisonment ; and the other, who had joined in the fraud, but had afterwards paid back his share, got eight months’ imprisonment. If one contrasts these sentences with that passed on me, I think the only conclusion to be drawn is that either they were let off very lightly, or I was very heavily punished.

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Whilst upon the subject of unjust sentences, it may be as well to say a few words about the most terrible cases of all—those in which accused persons are condemned for crimes of which they are innocent. In the ‘penny dreadful,’ the ‘shilling shocker,’ and even many ‘society’ novels of a far more pretentious kind, the hero or heroine often enough is a highly virtuous and abnormally innocent man or woman, who has, nevertheless, been convicted of a horrible crime upon overwhelming evidence, and condemned by a ferocious Judge to a heart-shaking sentence. Such cases are rare in real life, but to say that there are none of them, or that when they occur they are less tragic or sensational than those represented in fiction, would not be true. They do exist, and it is impossible to exaggerate their tragedy or their dismal, inexpressible injustice.

Many men I met in prison told me they were entirely innocent, but, as a rule, I accepted their story *cum grano salis*. There was one, nevertheless, who proved to be entirely truthful. He had been sentenced to ten years’ penal servitude for rape, and during all the time he was at Parkhurst he never ceased to protest against his conviction. Yet after he had served about a year of his

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sentence he was suddenly released, because it had been proved that he was innocent of the crime of which he had been convicted. His case is so markedly illustrative of the mistakes that Judges are capable of that it is worth while to give a short account of it. He was a married man living with his family. He had taken into his house as nursemaid to his children a young woman who had got into trouble and been for some time in prison. This was his accuser. She swore that he came into the room where she was sleeping with one of his children, and there committed the crime. That was all the evidence for the prosecution. For the defence it was proved that no suspicion of immorality had ever rested on the accused; that the woman had tried to extort money from him at various times, and that her previous career had been very bad. Yet the Judge summed up dead against the prisoner, and a verdict of 'Guilty' being found, he sent him to penal servitude for ten years. I believe the man's family and friends petitioned the Home Secretary against the sentence, but in vain. Shortly afterwards the woman who accused him was arrested and tried for some offence, and in the course of the trial it came out that she was about as bad a

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lot as possible, and belonged to a notorious gang of thieves. Even then the man whom she had ruined would most likely have been left to serve out the rest of his sentence had not Mr. Labouchere, I believe, taken up his cause in *Truth*. The result was a pardon was granted him for the crime he had never committed, and he was immediately released.

Many of the capital cases also show outrageous inequality and injustice. Here is one that came under my own notice at Parkhurst: The prisoner was a young fellow of the labouring class, who had a drunken, good-for-nothing father. On the death of the mother the young man took charge of the family, and worked hard to support all his little brothers and sisters. On coming home from work one evening he found the father drunk, as usual, having got hold of all the money that was to have kept the household going for the next few days and spent it. The boy in a moment of rage struck his father with the first thing he laid his hand on, and the blow proved fatal. For that he was condemned to be hanged, but the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life.

If this was not an instance of the innocent suffering for the guilty I do not know what is. In all such cases some thorough reform is urgently

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needed, but it is difficult to say what it should be. The whole subject of the powers of Judges regarding sentences, indeed, is extremely perplexing. It was fully discussed by Mr. Montague Crackanthorpe, K.C., in a very able article in the *Nineteenth Century* of January, 1900, entitled, 'Can Sentences be Standardized?' By standardized he meant reduced to some sort of recognised measure, so that no Judge should have the power to pass less than a certain minimum or more than a certain maximum sentence for any given crime. The puzzle is to find a satisfactory way of fixing these limits without laying down too hard and fast a rule.

So long ago as 1860 Mr. Herbert Spencer wrote: 'The decisions of the higher courts continually err in the direction both of undue severity and of undue lenity,' but with all his learning and penetration he admitted he was unable to supply a working remedy. In the course of a singularly broad-minded article in the *New Review* of June, 1893, Lord Brampton, one of the greatest and most just of living Judges, wrote: 'The inequalities of punishment now so frequent would be materially lessened by the adoption of fixed principles, to be determined by a commission of

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competent persons having knowledge and aptitude for dealing with the subject.' In consequence of Lord Brampton's efforts, a Commission came very near being appointed during the session of 1894-95 ; but it proved to be almost impossible to find 'competent persons having knowledge and aptitude for dealing with the subject,' who at the same time would have commanded the respect of the Bench and the confidence of the public. The attempt to settle the question, therefore, failed, and has never since been renewed. Mr. Crackanthorpe, however, in his article recalled a speech by Lord Penzance in the House of Lords so long ago as 1875, in which he declared that a proper standard of sentences might be fixed in one of three ways—namely, 'by Act of Parliament, by Order in Council, or by agreement among the Judges themselves.' Mr. Crackanthorpe dismissed the first two methods as clearly impracticable, but he considered the third gave the clue to the right solution of the problem. Following up that clue himself, he proposed that the Judges of the King's Bench Division should choose six of their number to form a sort of committee on sentences ; that each of these six should go over all the sentences he has ever passed, and average them for each

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crime ; that these averages having been tabulated, should again be averaged ; and that the general average thus arrived at should be made by law the standard of sentences for all judges. Mr. Crackanthorpe did not deny that this would be a rather rough-and-ready way of getting over the difficulty, or that it would at first be very repugnant to some of the greatest lawyers on the Bench. But he believed they would get into the habit of observing its limits, and that eventually it would be found to work well. I have only one suggestion to make, and that is that the six Judges could be assisted in their labours by examining a certain number of men who had undergone a sentence of penal servitude. I am inclined to think this might prove of value by furnishing just that element of practical experience which would otherwise be wanting.

In his article in the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Montague Crackanthorpe devoted two or three pages to startling instances of unequal or capricious sentences in past times ; and whilst insisting that the evil still exists in a modified form, and still demands a remedy, he expressed the opinion that no such extreme cases as those he mentioned could occur at the present day. There, I am



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afraid, the facts are against him, as, even while I was engaged in writing the preceding chapter, two men were tried on the same day before Mr. Justice Walton, one for murder, and the other for shooting with intent to kill. The former had cut his wife's throat through jealousy of a lodger, of whose relations with his wife he had been suspicious for months, having had several angry disputes with her about them. The latter, a foreigner, had fired at and wounded a girl who had been his sweetheart but had rejected him, and then attempted to commit suicide. Mr. Justice Walton sentenced the foreigner to fifteen years' penal servitude, especially dwelling on the 'cowardice and cruelty' of the act, and refusing to regard the attempt at suicide as any evidence of uncontrollable impulse from jealousy or disappointed love. The other man, who had actually committed as cowardly and cruel a murder as could well be conceived, he allowed to be charged with manslaughter only, and on his pleading guilty to the lesser offence, sentenced him to six months' imprisonment in the second division, so that he 'should not be contaminated by convicts.' If that was a lawful sentence, a just sentence, or a rational sentence, then there are scores of prisoners undergoing life-sentences

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to-day who ought to be instantly released and liberally compensated. I have been told that this is the first time a Judge has ever allowed a charge of murder, supported by overwhelming and undisputed evidence, to be reduced to one of manslaughter, with the avowed object of letting the accused off with a nominal sentence, on sentimental grounds. It is something quite new to English criminal procedure, and it introduces such a startling change that it ought surely to hasten an amendment of the statute affecting capital crime. It has always been the law that if a man detects his wife in the act of adultery, and kills either party or both, on the impulse of the moment, without altercation and without taking time to obtain a weapon not at hand, he may plead justifiable homicide and, upon proof, it shall hold him harmless. But even under those definite and exclusive conditions the Courts have hitherto made a practice of requiring very clear and strong evidence, lest a trap should have been laid or a premeditated design of murder effected. Mr. Justice Walton has now brushed this all away, as if it had been only so much cobweb. In the case I have described, he laid it down as an axiom of criminal law that if a woman 'threatens to commit

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adultery,' or even uses words which imply an intention to commit adultery at some future time, the husband may put her to death, and it will only be manslaughter, and that of so pardonable a kind as to be scarcely distinguishable from justifiable homicide.

What is even more astounding, Mr. Justice Walton called for no evidence that the facts were as stated. The only words the woman was alleged to have used were: 'I don't care. I shall do as I like,' when quarrelling with her husband about the lodger. These words were not sworn to by anybody, and, if ever spoken, they might have meant anything or nothing. But the Judge declared that 'if the woman said that, she probably said a good deal more,' and, upon that assumption, he dealt with the prisoner as an object of pity, not a subject for punishment. The lodger, who could have told the whole story, was not called as a witness at the trial, but at the coroner's inquest he denied that there was anything wrong between him and the woman. In fact, there was not a vestige of evidence, beyond a statement said to have been made by the husband to a fourth person, that any misconduct had taken place at all. On the other hand, it was proved and admitted that the husband,

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after a lengthy wrangle with his wife, told her he would kill her before the day was out, and, taking a razor from the mantelpiece, cut her throat with it. He then went to the police-station and said : 'I have killed my wife, and I am glad of it.' There never was a case in which the essentials of murder—namely, premeditation and the intention to take life—were more clearly present. Yet, on his own authority and in defiance of all precedent, Mr. Justice Walton laid it down that this was not murder, but manslaughter. It stands to reason that, if that is law, no married woman's life is safe for a single day, and, conversely, any woman who is jealous of her husband may kill him with impunity.

This opens out a field of discussion quite outside the scope of this book ; but I draw special attention to the case because it is the most striking illustration I have ever met with of the necessity for restricting the discretion of Judges—a discretion which some of them, at all events, are quite unfit to be entrusted with. Contrast that case with this, which came within my own knowledge whilst at Parkhurst. There was a prisoner there who had been a respectable shoemaker. He had married a woman much younger than himself,

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and had a child. He also had a younger brother. In course of time he received warning that his wife and his brother were more intimate than was right, and one day he taxed her with it. She admitted it defiantly, and she told him, moreover, that if she had another child he would not be the father of it, but the uncle. After saying that, she hit her husband a furious blow on the head. He, with his shoemaker's knife in his hand, inflicted a terrible wound on her, of which she died. For this he was convicted of murder, and condemned to be hanged; but, *in consideration of his wife's unfaithfulness*, his plea of provocation was listened to by the Secretary of State, on a numerously-signed petition being presented, and the death sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life. He has now done about seven years, and has thirteen more to do before his case will be reconsidered in the ordinary course. I should like to know what Mr. Justice Walton, or any other Judge of his way of thinking, has to say to that. If the man he tried, who coolly cut his wife's throat because she said she 'didn't care' when he reproached her about the lodger, was righteously let off with six months without hard labour, lest he should be 'contaminated by con-

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victs,' what about the unfortunate shoemaker who is now doing his eighth year of penal servitude for a sudden act of passion? As a writer in the *Westminster Gazette* very well put it at the time, according to Mr. Justice Walton, the murder of a wife suspected of unfaithfulness is a less offence than non-payment of rates.

But we have not yet done with this Judge's extraordinary sentences. Three days after the trial of the two cases I have mentioned a man was before him, charged with manslaughter, who had been a soldier and a policeman. He lived with his mother and sister, and bore an excellent character. Another man, an acquaintance of the family, who was a notorious brawler, with a very evil tongue, had spread vile stories about the mother and sister, and frequently assailed the ex-policeman, threatening to stab him. At length a fracas occurred, and, words leading to blows, the ex-policeman seized a tea-kettle and knocked the other man on the head, with fatal results. There was not the slightest suggestion of intention to kill; it was the work of a moment of rage, under intolerable insults, and it was a mere accident that the blow caused death. Yet Mr. Justice Walton sentenced that man to eighteen

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months' hard labour, and in doing so, actually referred to the other case—that of the murderer who only got six months in the second division—implying that the ex-policeman's crime was by far the worse of the two. How can there be justice so long as Judges with such ideas as those are placed upon the Bench, with absolute power to dispose of their fellow-creatures' life and liberty?

## XX

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AFTER the foregoing chapters had been prepared for the press, the report of the Commissioners of Prisons for the year ended March 31, 1902, was issued. Having read it carefully from beginning to end, I find no occasion to alter what I previously wrote. On the contrary, the views I expressed and the arguments I ventured to urge are only strengthened by the later information. For example, I went to considerable pains to show that the old dietary was neither more nor less than organized starvation, seriously injuring the health of the prisoners, and having a very bad moral effect on them as well, by filling them with a sense of injustice and sullen desperation. I predicted that the new dietary introduced in September, 1901, would make a great change for the better in these respects. This is what the Commissioners now say on that subject :

‘ Medical officers of prisons were instructed to



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watch closely the operation of the new dietary, and to report the results in six months' time. We are glad to be able to report that there is a practically unanimous opinion in favour of the new dietary.

'Its guiding principle is to try as far as possible to make the nature of the food correspond to the character of the work performed. All the forms of labour have been strictly classified with this view. It is satisfactory to note that more general contentment is said to prevail among convicts, with improved health. There are fewer complaints and applications for more food, while the amount of extra diet ordered has been reduced almost to vanishing point.'

As to the immediate effect of a sufficiency of wholesome food on the physical condition of prisoners, the Commissioners give some striking figures :

'The proportion of those who lose weight under the new scale is only 30 per cent., as against 73 per cent. under the old. The proportion who maintain weight is 10 to 15; who gain, 60 to 12.'

This is convincing enough, and it is very interesting, because it shows how cruelly stupid

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the old scale was, and what a difference could be made by using a little intelligence and human feeling. But a much stronger impression is gained by reading the separate reports of the inspectors, the medical inspector, the Governors, and the medical officers. Every one of these bears testimony to the excellent working of the new dietary, and many of them indicate that it may lead to very unexpected and far-reaching consequences. At Portland, in the first six months of its operation, it reduced the admissions to hospital from 217 to 145, and the daily average of complaining sick from 91 to 77. At Parkhurst its results during that short period were so remarkable that both the Governor and the medical officer drew special attention to them, the former going the length of suggesting that the higher scale of food now given to hard-labour prisoners should also be given to those occupied in indoor industrial labour, who now receive the lesser scale. He represents it as a distinct grievance that this inequality should exist, and he adds that, as long as it remains, 'the industries suffer, owing to the difficulty in getting men to go into the workshops, and the output is lowered both in quantity and quality by the want of zeal exhibited

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by many of the workers.' In a former chapter I have pleaded earnestly for this very reform, and it is certainly most gratifying to find so stern a disciplinarian as the Governor of Parkhurst recommending it. But it is the same story everywhere.

The medical officer of Borstal describes the introduction of the new dietary as 'the feature of greatest interest during the past year,' and dwells in pointed language on its good effects.

The medical officer of Pentonville reports: 'The new diet has come into force during the past twelve months, and the result is most satisfactory. The men "hold their own," there being a steady and persistent evenness of weight, varying on the side of gain rather than loss. There is very little food returned, and practically no discontent.'

The Governor of Plymouth Prison says the new dietary 'is highly appreciated, and marks another advance in the right direction.'

The Governor of Northampton Prison, while dwelling on the general amelioration of prison life under the Prison Act of 1898, remarks: 'More lately the improved dietary has, more than anything, added to the comfort and well-being of all those whose misfortune it is to be cooped up

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within prison walls. The operation of these improvements has done a great deal of good.'

The medical officer of Carlisle Prison says: 'There have been no removals on medical grounds, and the hospitals have been vacant for the most part. The dietary has proved a great success so far as the health and contentment of the prisoners is concerned, the applications for more food having practically vanished.'

The medical officer of Carmarthen Prison heads his report thus: 'Further experience of the new dietary has confirmed the opinion that it is sufficient to maintain health and strength. In most cases there has been an improvement in general health, while in those who have lost weight no impairment of physical strength has been observed. The health of the prisoners has been generally very good, and it has not been necessary to recommend the release of any prisoner owing to disease.'

Many similar testimonies might be added. In fact, there is not a single dissentient opinion on the subject. It may be objected, perhaps, that the 'comfort,' 'well-being' and 'contentment' of prisoners are not the objects of imprisonment, and that when they exist the deterrent effect of punish-

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ment is done away with. A careful study of all these reports, however, Governors', medical officers', and chaplains' alike, will satisfy anyone that the very opposite is the case. They show that, with improved health, resulting from the new dietary, a remarkable change has also come over the demeanour and behaviour of the great body of prisoners. Violence or misconduct of any sort has become comparatively rare. In some prisons, even, there has not been a single punishment. On the other hand, there has been a wonderful increase of industry, which must surely be regarded as a most hopeful step towards reformation. Some of the reports say the improvement in this respect is so extraordinary that even the worst conducted class of prisoners seem now to have turned over a new leaf. They work in quite a different spirit, and show themselves altogether more amenable to good influences.

It must not be supposed that this great reform has been effected at heavy expense to the taxpayers. Under the old dietary extra food was given in an irregular way to a great number of prisoners, who literally could not live on the regular diet. Now, the Medical Inspector, Dr. Herbert Smalley, reports as follows: 'Except at Parkhurst,

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where most of the invalid and semi-invalid convicts are congregated, there is practically no extra food ordered, whereas before the alteration, at Borstal, 75 per cent. of the convicts were receiving some addition to the prescribed rations; at Portland and Dartmoor considerable numbers were so doing. At Parkhurst the number has been reduced from a daily average of some forty-one prisoners to a daily average of some eight prisoners.'

Dr. Smalley also reports that the waste of food, which used to be enormous, is now reduced to 'the unavoidable amount which must occur in a community of persons each of whom has to be supplied with an exact quantity at each meal.' In other words, the prisoners now eat their regular food because it is eatable, whereas before they refused it because it was uneatable, and clamoured till they got something better. But this is not all.

The Comptroller of Accounts and Stores, in his report on Prison Industries, which is a new feature of this year's volume, says :

'In presenting my first report on the industrial employment of prisoners, I am glad to be able to announce that the year ended March 31 last

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establishes a record in the value of the labour performed, even when compared with the very successful years which have immediately preceded it.

‘The entire value of all descriptions of prison labour — namely, manufactures, farm, building work, domestic services, etc.—has advanced from £209,071 in 1900-1901 to £215,277, being an improvement to the extent of £6,206.’

In short, the evidence is overwhelming that punishment by hunger, which prevailed from 1864 to 1901, was not only a crime, but a colossal blunder. It entailed miserable suffering and life-long injury on tens of thousands of helpless wretches; it cost the State vast sums of money; and it was clearly responsible for many of the defects and disappointments of an otherwise enlightened penal system.

I now come to the bearing of the report of 1902 on another important reform which I have strongly recommended in a previous chapter—namely, the extension of the system of remission of sentences to be earned by good conduct and industry. As I have shown, this has been denounced by some writers as a weak-minded concession to sentimentality, and as tending to

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encourage crime. The Commissioners, however, think very differently. They say :

‘A very noticeable feature in the reports for the year is the emphatic way in which many Governors speak of the advantages arising from the application of the principle of remission of part of a sentence for industry with good conduct. Further experience has strengthened the opinion, previously expressed by us, that the power to earn remission has a salutary effect on the mind of the prisoner, and is a powerful contributory factor towards better discipline in prison. It is for the Secretary of State to consider whether the time has now come for shortening the period of imprisonment rendering prisoners eligible for this privilege.’

Here again it is necessary to read the separate reports, in order to realize how striking the testimony is to which the Commissioners thus draw attention. I could fill pages with extracts from them, all very much to the purpose, but I will content myself with two or three examples. The Governor of Knutsford Prison writes :

‘The Prison Act of 1898—in so far as division of offenders, power to earn remission, and part payment of fines is concerned—acts admirably, and



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with the many privileges now accorded to prisoners is an incentive to good behaviour, and mitigates, to a great extent, the former feeling that when a man was in prison he was, so to speak, lost to the world, and had nothing to look forward to.

‘One cannot help noticing the cheerful way in which the prisoners now go about their several duties, a great contrast to some few years ago, and without discipline and supervision being in any way relaxed.’

The Governor of Winchester Prison says :

‘Power to earn remission of sentence has worked well ; it acts as an incentive to good conduct on the one hand, and as a deterrent on the other, in that marks can be forfeited for misconduct.’

The Governor of Wandsworth Prison makes some remarks which entirely bear out my own observations :

‘Power to earn remission is the most powerful restraint of disorder, and when marks for remission have been forfeited there is much evidence in letters home that the prisoner means to do his utmost to get them restored. This does not apply to some—a very minute percentage of the lot—who are really wicked rather than weak. I have known

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a case of a man released by earning remission, and back in prison before the expiration of original sentence.'

For the best support of all, however, for the views I have offered, I am indebted not to a Governor, but to the chaplain of Reading Prison, whose report is full of valuable information and shrewd suggestions. He writes:

'The remission of a fourth part of a sentence after the first six months to a well-behaved and industrious prisoner is most valuable for discipline and for the peace, contentment, and hopefulness of a prisoner's disposition. There are instances where one wishes an actual and substantial remission of the sentence itself, and I heartily applaud the recommendation of the late Brussels Congress, that reparation made by an offender should make its count for remission.'

All of these reports which I have quoted refer to local prisons and comparatively short sentences; but the same principle obviously applies with even greater force to convict prisons and long terms of penal servitude. I think it fair to say that the chapter in which I propose an extension of the remission system, on a graduated scale, was written some months before the report of 1902

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appeared, and was not prompted in any way from official sources. It was an idea that occurred to my own mind, after thinking the matter out, both whilst in prison and after my release, and I am truly glad to find that the same idea has found favour among those whose combined influence must sooner or later lead to practical results. I feel more sure than ever that in a merciful, but discriminating, system of remissions, accompanied by fair treatment of prisoners, lies the best hope of emptying the prisons, which should be the main object of all penal reform.

If I may use the expression regarding so depressing a subject, the Prisons' Report of 1902 is pleasant reading compared with that of 1901. Its pages are eloquent of progress and improvement in many directions.

There is one direction, nevertheless, where its tone is so very much the reverse that every effort ought to be made to bring its strictures to the attention of those concerned—chiefly the Home Office officials and the magistrates. I refer to the many melancholy and indignant passages protesting against the committal to prison of young children, dying people, and paupers who are physically unfit for work. The facts brought

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to light and fully verified in these reports show an almost incredible want of good feeling or good sense on the part of magistrates. What are we to think of men, vested with judicial authority, who know no better than to send two little brothers of twelve and nine respectively to gaol for five days, in default of payment of four shillings, for damaging a fence; and dozens of others of twelve, thirteen, and fourteen for such awful crimes as throwing snowballs, letting off crackers, or playing football in the street? The chaplain of Reading Prison gives a list of twenty-one of these miserable urchins, which includes a girl of fourteen, who was kept a week in gaol before being sent to a reformatory school, and two boys, one of whom was kept in gaol for ten days and the other for a month before trial. Yet so trivial were their offences that the longest sentence passed on any one of them was fourteen days! The Governor of Newcastle-on-Tyne Prison enters a very vigorous protest against this shameful practice of making criminals of children who have been guilty of nothing worse than boisterous conduct or childish mischief.

He also shows the absurdity of the short sentences which so many magistrates have the

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heartlessness to inflict on poor lads who scarcely know what they have been charged with. He says :

‘Four were only twelve years of age, three thirteen, twenty fourteen, and forty-five fifteen years of age. Seven were sentenced to two days’ imprisonment only, which simply means that they were bathed, dressed, and medically examined during the afternoon of their reception, and discharged the next morning. Forty-six were sentenced to three days only. I cannot but wish that some other method than sending boys of such tender years to prison for most of these offences could be devised.’

Could anything be more wicked or senseless? The effect of it is that each of these short imprisonments counts afterwards as a ‘previous conviction,’ and so thousands of boys are classed as criminals before they arrive at manhood who ought never to have seen the inside of a prison at all. The remedy for all this is perfectly simple. It is indicated in an admirable passage in the report of the Governor of Durham Prison :

‘I regret to have to refer again to the well-worn subject of young children being brought into prison for short periods. The practice con-

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tinues from many Courts, and, considering the ruinous effect upon their future, I would advocate the absolute prohibition of such a punishment being carried out until the case has been submitted for consideration to the Secretary of State. If a hardened ruffian when in prison commits a savage assault upon a warder, he cannot receive the fitting punishment of flogging when it has been awarded by Visiting Magistrates until this form has been gone through; and I submit that the point at issue is of immeasurably greater importance when it is a question of a child being sent to prison, for some non-criminal offence especially, as so many have been during the past year, including one only ten years of age, who had all the appearance, both in dress and manner, of having been brought straight from the nursery or some well-to-do family, though, as a matter of fact, his parents were poor.'

This is the last extract I must allow myself to make on the subject, but there are many more I should like to make, all pointing to the same conclusion—that in a multitude of cases of child imprisonment the crime is not with the children, but with the magistrates. In free and Christian England it ought to be made absolutely illegal to

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send any boy or girl under sixteen to prison, at least until a reformatory has been tried and failed. The system of 'convicting' penniless children for non-payment of a fine ought also to be abolished.

As to the cruel and foolish practice of sending dying men and helpless cripples to prison, the reports are equally eloquent in their protests.

Dr. Smalley dwells very strongly upon it, pointing out that during the year no fewer than thirty-five prisoners died within a week of being received, and that 'many, if not most, of these unhappy creatures were obviously in a condition unsuitable for a place of punishment.'

The Governor of Wakefield Prison writes: 'The mortality has been somewhat higher than usual, but an analysis of the deaths shows that in every case the disease had originated before admission to prison. No less than seven out of a total of eight died in less than seven days after being received. Two died in two days, one died in three, three died in five, and one died in six. One cannot help a feeling of regret that some other method cannot be found of dealing with prisoners who when before the Court are practically in a dying condition.'

Exactly similar remarks occur again and again

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regarding prisoners who are sent to 'hard labour' though quite incapable of any kind of physical exertion. Most of these are not criminals at all, but paupers, charged by the workhouse authorities with 'refusing their task.' Directly they arrive in prison and are medically examined, they are found to be paralyzed, or in an advanced stage of consumption, or otherwise enfeebled, and are sent into hospital, where they remain for the whole term of their sentence, unnecessarily swelling the prison population, and most unjustly incurring the criminal stigma. The Commissioners give some dreadful examples, as follows :

'No. 1, sixty-two years of age, was ordered to break stones, but he was partly paralyzed in his right hand and side, and could not do the work. No. 2 was also ordered to break stones: he was suffering from recent vaccination, five days old, and also had recently undergone a serious surgical operation; the wound from this had not healed, and required frequent dressing in prison. No. 3 was unfit for labour of any kind: he was an epileptic, and had recurrent and frequent fits the whole time he was in prison.'

All of these men were actually sentenced to seven days' hard labour by the Canterbury magis-



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trates for refusing to work in the Union. Here, again, the remedy is perfectly simple. No magistrate should ever commit a pauper to prison for 'refusing his task' until the accused 'has been carefully examined by a medical man and certified fit for the task he had failed to perform.' That is what the Commissioners say, and what every reasonable being must approve. But Bumble is often more powerful than any Commissioners, and many magistrates, unfortunately, are anything but reasonable beings.

After what I had said in a previous chapter about the experiment of allowing certain classes of prisoners the privilege of walking and talking together as a reward for good conduct, it is pleasing to find that the report of 1902 shows I was quite right. Very few of the Governors now object to the rule, while the Governor of Parkhurst, who was most bitterly opposed to it at first, reports, after a year's trial, that 'the evils to be apprehended from talking at exercise have been much reduced by recent restrictions.' That is just what I anticipated when I said that the good or bad working of the rule was all a matter of whether the Governor used his discretion wisely or unwisely. I am more convinced than

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ever that, within proper limits, the right of speech and of interchange of ideas is better for prisoners and for prison discipline than perpetual silence, which can only be enforced by suppressing Nature.

Before closing this chapter I think it right to touch on one feature of the Commissioners' report of 1902, which at first sight seems to contradict the conclusions I came to earlier as to the steady and progressive diminution of crime owing to reforms of the penal system. The Commissioners begin their report by drawing attention specially to the remarkable rise in the prison population during the year. They say :

‘There were, including court-martial prisoners, 193 more prisoners sentenced to penal servitude, and 17,163 to imprisonment, than in the previous year. The daily average of prisoners detained in the local prisons was 16,267, or the highest since the year 1885. We have endeavoured to ascertain whether local causes have existed which would account for the growth of the prison population. It is, however, impossible to assign any specific cause, as the increase has been generally distributed throughout the country ; and it is our opinion that it would be sanguine to anticipate, having

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regard to many circumstances—*e.g.*, the growth of the large industrial centres, involving in many cases an extension of borough limits, and thus a greater activity and efficiency of police, a multiplication of statutes and by-laws involving penal consequences, and an increase of population pressing against the means of subsistence—that the average numbers will again fall to the level of the last decade. Prison statistics go to show that it is not unlikely that, while serious or indictable crime will continue to show a decrease, both absolutely and relatively to population, petty crime will show a decrease only relatively to population; or, in other words, that with the increase of population there will be a corresponding increase of persons committed to prison on summary conviction.'

This means, practically, that a multitude of petty crimes and petty criminals are being created by extending to country districts municipal laws which impose penalties involving imprisonment. For instance, it is no crime to play at snowball on a country road, but it becomes a crime as soon as that road is included in the borough. It is no crime to own an unregistered dog on one side of a stream to-day, whilst a man may be sent to gaol

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for it on the other side. To-morrow, or next week, the boundary is extended, and then it is criminal to own an unregistered dog on either side of the stream, and so on *ad infinitum*. This, the Commissioners think, is the cause of the remarkable rise in the prison population during 1901-1902; and if their explanation stood alone, it would certainly be very alarming and discouraging. But perhaps the following extract from the chaplain of Durham Prison's report, in the Prison Report of 1901-1902, may have a good deal of truth in it. This is what he says:

'The increase of crime appears to be mainly due to the increase of drink, owing to the soldiers and volunteers from the war spending the money which they earned in South Africa in drink, treating all who will accept their hospitality. As much as £18 or £20 have gone in a single night's revelry. It would be good if Discharged Soldiers' Aid Societies could be established to protect our brave men from falling a prey to the national vice, and help them to procure employment.'

To this it may fairly be added that during the war there was a general loosening of restraint throughout the kingdom, and a widespread idea

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that things might be done with impunity which could not be done in ordinary times ; and so, perhaps, when the next Prison Report is issued for 1902-1903 it will show that the average number of the prison population has again fallen to the level of 1901, or even below it.

## XXI

### FINAL

My last words must be words of thanks. In my first chapter I made some reference to the different treatment I met with from different people in my social circle, as soon as it became generally known that I was under a cloud. With that experience in my memory, I was under no illusions when I came out of prison in November, 1901. I knew that I had yet to bear what is by no means the lightest part of the punishment to a man having once been in the position that I had been in—the loss of friends, and the cold contempt of those who had once been among my most intimate acquaintances. I therefore made up my mind that the only thing to do was to face the world with eyes straight to the front, looking neither to the right nor to the left, but leaving it to everyone who might wish to recognise me to make the first advance. I felt very sure, nevertheless, that of those whose attachment I valued

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most, some, at all events, would not turn their backs upon me, and I was not disappointed. I have every reason to be grateful for the true-hearted staunchness I have met with from many whose goodwill was precious to me, whether their social position was the highest or the humblest ; for I may say that 'all sorts and conditions of men and women ' have shown great kindness and consideration to me since my return, and no words of mine can fittingly express my gratitude to them, one and all. I cannot say in words what their kindness has meant to me. More than anything else, too, it has made up to me for the slights of others who have seen fit to go out of their way to show me that for the future they and I move in very different worlds.

Naturally, I avoided going to places where I should be likely to meet many people whom I had formerly known in society. But I had no idea of shutting myself up for fear of coming in contact with people who might not wish to know me. I went about and lived my life regardless of anyone's attitude towards me. It certainly has given me some curious glimpses of human nature. I could mention many instances of the way people have treated

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me, kindly or otherwise, but I will only give one.

Last July a lady, who had been one of the first to welcome me back again, died after a very short illness. She was beloved by all who knew her—a brave, loyal friend, whose loss, not only to her husband and children, but to all her friends, was a deep sorrow and a heavy blow. She and her husband had been to me and mine more like brother and sister than friends only, and they both behaved to me through all my trouble, even when it first began five years ago, with an unflinching loyalty which I daily remember. After her death I had a letter from her husband, saying he hoped I would attend the memorial service that would be held at St. Mark's, North Audley Street, as he knew she would have wished me to be present. I knew that the greater part of the congregation would consist of people whom I had known before my downfall, and many of whom I had not seen since, but I went. After the service, when leaving the church, I naturally was rubbing shoulders with many of my old acquaintances. Some of them kindly nodded or spoke to me. Others put on a glassy look. When I got into the street, however, a



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man, the head of one of our greatest families, respected and looked up to, not only by all who know him personally, but by all who know him only by hearsay, came up and shook hands with me, and asked me to walk with him ; later in the day I also received a letter from his wife, who is a very old friend of ours, asking me to go and see her. Well, as we were walking, carriage after carriage passed us with people who had been in the church, and some of whom had chosen not to see me. Among them was an old friend of mine—at least, I thought he was a friend—but, though I had met him face to face more than once, he had looked the other way. When coming out of the church, though he was close to me, he took no notice, but he saw the man, whom I have already referred to, speak to me, and me walking with him. That same day my so-called old friend met me again, and this time he waved his hand and smiled from ear to ear, profuse in his endeavours to attract my attention. However, it was I this time who looked the other way, as it was so very evident that the reason he noticed me was because he had seen who had spoken to me earlier in the day. Such fair-weather friends are not worth the keeping ; but, as I have said, the unwavering

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fidelity of those whose goodwill I prize most has more than made up for the coldness of others. In closing my book, I wish them all to know that I shall always remember each of their individual acts of kindness, and wherever they go and in whatever they do I wish them, with all my heart, good-luck.

THE END



